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The Letters of
CHARLES AND MARY LAMB

FIRST COMPLETE EDITION



LAMB (AGED 30) IN THE DRESS OF A VENETIAN SENATOR

*From the Painting by William Hazlitt in the
National Portrait Gallery*

THE
LETTERS *of* CHARLES LAMB

to which are added those of his sister

MARY LAMB

Edited by

E. V. LUCAS

VOLUME ONE

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INTRODUCTION

THE present edition of the letters of Charles Lamb is the first to bring all the known material into one work: a desirable condition, made possible by Mr. Hugh Dent's enthusiasm and by his firm's acquisition of the residuary legatee's rights, by the courtesy of collectors, and by the friendly co-operation of other publishers. Thus not only do these three volumes contain all the letters in the editions of Talfourd, of Percy Fitzgerald, of Bohn's Library, of Ainger, of W. Carew Hazlitt, of Everyman's Library, based on the labours of William Macdonald, of the Boston Bibliophile Society, 1905, and of my own in its latest form, 1912, but also whatever has come to light since their day.

That Lamb wrote many more letters than we possess is made evident by the leanness of certain years—say, for instance, from 1809 to 1818, while there is nothing preceding those to Coleridge beginning with 27th May 1796, when the writer was twenty, marvellously preserved by their not too orderly recipient, although there would, for instance, have been at least an acknowledgment, but probably much more, of Coleridge's lines *To a Friend, Together with an Unfinished Poem*, sent to Lamb, who was the friend indicated, in December 1794. We know also, from references here and there, that other letters must have been written, and from time to time some of them will, I feel sure, emerge. Meanwhile, here is as complete a harvest as now can be.

When, more than thirty years ago, I was first engaged in this most agreeable of tasks, there was less concentration. The correspondence with Coleridge, for example, was in London, the property of the late Mrs. Arthur Morrison; the Moxon letters were at Rowfant; the Rickman letters were in England, but, through copyright restrictions, inaccessible to me, while the Manning letters belonged to an American collector who refused to let them be seen. Since then, however, all these treasures passed into the hands of one wealthy and omnivorous collector, Henry E. Huntington of Pasadena, who has since died, and they are now in

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the Huntington Library there, the property in perpetuity of the State of California, for any one to examine in comfort.

America indeed (although, in a moment of petulance, Lamb once vowed he would write only for antiquity) now possesses most of his MSS. At Pasadena there are more than two hundred of the letters, all of which are in this edition. Lamb's considerable correspondence with Wordsworth belongs now, by bequest, to the University of Texas, and is incorporated here; in the Pierpont Morgan Library, now vested in the City of New York, there are some thirty letters, which I have been allowed to copy; in the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington I found a dozen; and so forth. And then there are the private collectors, each with MSS. and first editions, such as Mr. Owen D. Young of New York; Mr. John Gribbel of Philadelphia; Mr. Frank B. Bemis of Boston, who died while this edition, in which he was taking so much interest, was being printed; Mr. W. T. H. Howe of Cincinnati; Mr. Gabriel Wells of New York; Mr. A. Edward Newton of Philadelphia; and Dr. A. S. W. Rosenbach of Philadelphia and New York, who has set apart from his stock certain Lamb items for his own private delectation. And then, all over America, there are the proud possessors of a single Lamb letter, while one wrote to me, enclosing a copy, from Honolulu: to all of whom my most cordial thanks are also tendered. Since private ownership frequently changes, I have marked the home only of such letters as are safely at rest in institutions, but I hope that there are no omissions in the list of acknowledgments that follows. In addition to those already named I wish to thank: the Earl of Crewe; Mr. Thomas J. Wise; the Oxford University Press; Dr. Williams's Library; Edinburgh University Library; the Drexel Institute; the Fogg Collection of Autographs, Maine Historical Society; the Harvard University Library and the Harry Elkins Widener Memorial Library, in the same building; Yale University Library; Washington University Library; Historical Society of Pennsylvania; University of Texas; Library of the State of Iowa; the New York Public Library; the National Library of Scotland; University of Michigan; Mr. Hugh McKay; Mr. R. C. Bald; Messrs. Quaritch; Mr. W. T. Spencer; Mr. Arthur Swann of the American Art Association Galleries, New York; Mr. Ernest

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Dressel North; Mr. James H. Quinn; Mr. Walter M. Hill; Miss Cornelia Baker-Adams; Miss Emma Hutchinson; Mrs. Elizabeth Sage Hare; the Executors of the late James A. Spoor; Miss Williams; Mr. Paul Moser; Mr. E. B. Hackett; Mrs. Sadie Spence Clephan; Mr. Edwin B. Hill; Mrs. Edwin O. Holler; Mr. C. J. Widdows; Mr. F. A. Downing.

What England retains, beyond the Bernard Barton correspondence in the British Museum, bequeathed by Mrs. Edward FitzGerald, and the Dyce and Forster treasures at the Victoria and Albert Museum, I am unable to report; for public requests for such information have yielded almost no results, the most important being, I think, the full text of the letter of 25th May 1820 to Dorothy Wordsworth which I received from Miss Emma Hutchinson. The letters to Southey, still in Talfourd's transcription, should, for instance, be somewhere, but I know of only two, and there are many others the present traditional text of which badly needs collating with their originals. Such can be the perversity of Fate that it is probable that the mere publication of this book will recall to many memories that box of old papers in the attic which surely had something by a man named Lamb in it. And, if so, piqued as an editor must be by such tardy discoveries, all I shall say will be: 'Better late than never.'

As to the value and importance of these letters, their good sense, their wit, their humanity, their fun, their timeliness and timelessness, I have nothing fresh to say: the book is the evidence. I would, however, remark that the chronological arrangement and annotations constitute a new biography of this unique and fascinating figure in English literature, and probably the best loved.

If any critic cavils at the triviality of certain of the briefer inclusions, such as mere acknowledgments of invitations or gifts, I take my stand beside the first editor of Lamb's correspondence, his friend and admirer, Thomas Noon Talfourd, who said, in the preface to the *Final Memorials*: 'There is, indeed, scarcely a note (a notelet, he used to call his very little letters) Lamb ever wrote, which has not some tinge of that quaint sweetness, some hint of that peculiar union of kindness and whim, which distinguishes him from all other poets and humorists.'

A word of warning ought perhaps to be uttered with regard to

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the odd spellings which may now and then perplex the reader and lead him to a poor opinion of the printers. Misprints no doubt have crept in here and there, although I hope not many; but for the most part the errors are Lamb's own, and have been scrupulously perpetuated. Certain proper names, such, for example, as Procter's, he consistently spelt wrongly, and as a general rule he was careless. Such things, to him, did not matter; what did matter was to communicate his thoughts.

Lamb's pen-work, where it is not too crowded, is usually clear enough. He confesses to a 'bold free hand and a fearless flourish,' whereas his sister, he says, writes a 'pimping, mean, detestable hand,' indulges in no 'bold blots,' and always makes a fair copy, dotting her *i*'s and crossing her *t*'s. In another place he remarks that, 'though she writes a pretty good style, and has some notion of the force of words, she is not always so certain of the true orthography of them . . .' This is the pot calling the kettle black, for Lamb is capable of distorting familiar words as well as place-names and persons, and he is not even consistent in his distortions. He can write 'argueer,' 'volum,' and 'Hazzlit,' and he can produce within a few lines 'tease' and 'teaze,' 'likend' and 'likened,' 'Buonarparte' and 'Bona-partte.' He starts with a bracket and fails to complete his enclosure with another, while his punctuation is often as vague as that of many poets.

These oddities are so numerous that they appear to be natural, though the wild spellings of French look like deliberate comic exaggerations. Occasionally a *sic*! has been editorially added, but it would be idle to pepper the pages with such ejaculations. The reader will perceive Lamb's curious ways and be content with them. His variant spellings are his freakish self not engaged in the dull monotony of business, even though he may be writing at the East India House. It is also possible, Mr. Rendall suggests, that he is paying an unconscious tribute to the practice of his favourite Elizabethans, with whom thought and spelling both were free.

To the captious, complaining that there is too much annotation, I would reply that, apart from general interest, the fullness represents an attempt to illustrate the nature of Lamb's memory for what he had read and his devotion to such favourite authors

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as Horace and Juvenal, Shakespeare and Milton, who were continually in his mind.

One edition of the Letters which was projected, begun, and then abandoned, is worth mention. This was dated 1868, and was to have been in three volumes, with E. Moxon & Co. as the publishers and George Augustus Sala as the editor; but it stopped at volume one, and was not continued. Sala's essay on Lamb's life and genius was, however, completed and printed: a characteristic document. There was also a preliminary statement which deserves notice, running thus:

It has been suggested that it should generally be made known that a Subscription is being raised to erect a Monument to the memory of Charles Lamb in Edmonton Churchyard to replace the tasteless head-stone that is now there. The Tomb and Bust will be executed by Thomas Woolner, Esq., and Subscriptions in furtherance of this object will be received by Messrs. Moxon.

This scheme, like the edition of the Letters, came to nothing: Woolner, I assume, did not proceed with the bust; and the old tombstone, with Cary's lines on it, still stands. But during the past year, the centenary of Lamb's death, new plans for providing a memorial of him have been formulated, and to that end a bust has been modelled by Sir William Reynolds-Stephens, based on Hazlitt's 1805 portrait.

In arranging this edition as I have done, I have been greatly helped by the researches of the late Mrs. G. A. Anderson, who made Lamb a ten years' study, and whose conclusions as to various vexed questions were placed at my disposal by her son, Mr. Basil Anderson. To him and another adviser, Mr. Edmund Blunden, whose writings on Lamb yield to none in sympathetic understanding and even inspiration, I am indebted for the accounts of Mrs. Anderson that follow, which I am pleased to be able to print on the threshold of this first complete edition.

Mr. Basil Anderson writes:

Gertrude Alison Field was born at Hither Green on 20th October 1875. She was considerably the youngest member of a large family. Her father, Frederick Field,¹ an analytical chemist and mineralogist, died while she was still a child: from him she inherited a small remnant of his very fine mineral collection, to which she continued to add until her marriage to Donald L. Anderson in 1899. She shared with her

¹ 1826-85. See article on him in F. Boase's *Modern English Biography*, vol. i, 1892. He was F.R.S. and published many papers on scientific subjects.

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husband a fondness for chess, for which indeed she had a remarkable talent, being on three occasions British Lady Champion. In 1901 her only son, Basil, was born.

For many years after her marriage Mrs. Anderson had little time for anything more than the management of the household, her share of the responsibility being unusually large owing to her husband having the misfortune to be deaf and dumb. In 1908 the Andersons moved from their rather ugly little home near Wandsworth Common to a pleasant house with a large garden at Woldingham, Surrey, where they lived very happily until Mrs. Anderson's death. Mrs. Anderson felt very keenly the horror of the war, and it was in the early war years, with her son far away at Sedbergh School, that she began reading, as a relaxation from the worries of the present, the lives and letters of the writers of the eighteenth and early nineteenth century.

This study was at first desultory, but after reading Lamb's letters her old joy in his writing became linked with an intense interest in the man himself, amounting to a sort of mental 'falling in love.' She was in fact 'most confoundedly bit,' and with characteristic energy and thoroughness started buying and reading biographies of all the Lamb circle, and all the editions of the *Letters*. The reading of Mr. Lucas's pocket edition was followed by the larger edition; the copious notes illuminating so many obscure points and references fired her with the desire to unravel all those little mysteries connected with the Letters as yet unsolved, and she was soon involved in research.

The contributions of Major S. Butterworth to the *Athenæum* and *Notes and Queries* on Lamb topics led to a correspondence between the two enthusiasts. Undoubtedly the contact with Major Butterworth did much to further the progress of her work, and that not so much from the information he so generously gave as from the stimulus provided by their friendly rivalry in the garnering of new Lamb material. So early as his second letter Major Butterworth wrote: ' . . . your letters can never be too long or too numerous. I adore Charles Lamb and am never tired of anything even remotely connected with him.' Later, these stimulating contacts with fellow-workers in the same field became more numerous. Several of these Elians were sufficiently interested to make the pilgrimage to Woldingham: it is doubtful whether the Lamb treasures to be seen there or the infectious enthusiasm of G. A. A. in revealing them made these visits the more worth while. Among the most frequent and welcome of these visitors were Mr. F. A. Downing (founder of the Elian Society), Mr. P. P. Howe (biographer and editor of Hazlitt), and Mr. Edmund Blunden, then more noted as poet than as scholar; but whose activities since that date have revealed in him the scholar comparable in stature with the poet.

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By dint of making the best possible use of the generosity (often quite amazing) of booksellers and private collectors in England and America, G. A. A. was able gradually to accumulate copies of the bulk of those letters of C. L. which were as yet unpublished in any of the editions. These letters were beautifully transcribed in italic script, and neatly pasted into their chronological position in Mr. Lucas's larger edition. As may be imagined, the two volumes in question, however carefully fed with so much rich new fare, waxed exceeding fat and had to be handled with caution. In accordance with Mrs. Anderson's own wish, these volumes, containing the nucleus of her work as she left it, are destined for the care of the British Museum.

Finding her memory unequal to the calls made upon it by her work, Mrs. Anderson, with her usual thoroughness, underwent a course of memory training, and her memory thus fortified was extremely useful to her in those cases where only a glimpse of some new letter could be obtained. She would memorize the whole after one or two perusals, transcribe it in some adjacent teashop, and return for a further glimpse to correct any small errors in her transcription. She would also copy the address and postmark as exactly as possible, as affording perhaps the only means of dating the letter correctly.

In 1924, before her untimely death, following an operation, on 6th September, she was co-ordinating her efforts towards the completion of a definitive edition of Lamb's letters. After her death, her unfinished work did not readily lend itself to publication, quite apart from questions of copyright and other commercial considerations—so much of value had passed with her beyond the grave.

The *London Mercury* for November 1922 contained eight unpublished letters of Charles Lamb with notes by G. A. A., and later the same journal published posthumously two articles by her: 'Lamb and the Two G. D.'s' (February 1925), and 'On the Dating of Lamb's Letters.' In this last essay she revealed some of the ingenious methods which she used in ensuring the correct chronology of undated letters.

A year after her death Martin Secker published *The Letters of Thomas Manning to Charles Lamb*, under the nominal editorship of G. A. A. The publication of this book, forming in a sense a memorial volume, was only made possible by the very generous interest and scholarship of Mr. P. P. Howe, who was able to supplement and incorporate the fragmentary notes made by Mrs. Anderson on these interesting letters, the originals of which were for some years in her possession, and by the kindness of Major Butterworth, who had been unfortunately prevented by illness from himself carrying on his work on this very subject.

Though in her later years Mrs. Anderson's heart and soul were in this work, she did not allow it to encroach upon her other wide activities,

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for which the many friends and relatives to whom the name of Elia meant nothing remembered her with love and sorrow after her death. Only when the candles were lit on the wide red table, the bulging volumes of the Letters before her, with note-books, ruler, mapping pen to hand, did she gather her ghostly fellowship around her, and enter with infinite satisfaction upon her nightly task.

Mr. Blunden writes:

Thus far Mr. Basil Anderson; another hand can only confirm and extend what he has written. About 1920, allusions by me, in the *Athenæum*, to Charles Lamb, and connected topics, soon brought me a letter from Mrs. Anderson, and among the first of her communications was a list of the contributors to Southey's *Annual Anthology*, displaying her skill in collecting facts and advancing probable solutions of obscure points. I was to find that she entered into correspondence with many writers throughout the world who published book, pamphlet, article, or 'letter to the editor' relating to Lamb; no one could have corrected an error more gracefully or asked for or imparted information more modestly. It was easy at first to under-estimate the range and force of her scholarship. If that word suggests that her reading was only among bygone authors, let the thought be banished at once. Mrs. Anderson was an exceedingly observant follower of modern literature, particularly poetry, and it was delightful to think that even in this prosaic age there was somewhere such a perceptive listener for the 'sounds and sweet airs' of poetical promise. Her criticism was genial, concise, and mainly right.

At one moment, to judge by her collection of books, Mrs. Anderson was inclined to make Shelley the object of her studies. She would have excelled in annotating his life and letters; but I take it that her regard for Mr. Roger Ingpen's editorial strength caused her to look away from Shelley to an author whose letters, in 1917 or so, were not so fully marshalled. At any rate, she was destined to find Charles Lamb, so far as might be. Her desire was to recapture him in the sense of the verses which Boswell so proudly printed on his title-page:

Quo fit ut OMNIS
Votivâ pateat veluti descripta tabellâ
VITA SENIS.—

HORAT.

I formed the impression that Lamb was probably helping her. She seemed to have a more than logical way of discovering new things about him. She had naturally a beautiful penmanship, but gradually she wrote almost Lamb's handwriting (which had its own beauty). I remember with what sweetness she showed me an original letter from

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Manning, and said: 'I like to think of this having been carried about in Lamb's pocket.'

It was an education to visit her when her work was at its height. Her method of research was at once bold and minute. In the first place, an ordinary reader of Mr. Lucas's former edition of Lamb's *Letters* would have been content with that excellent work; or would have felt that, where so resourceful an inquirer had perforce come to a stop, nothing more could be done. If one felt so, two minutes in Mrs. Anderson's company sufficed for a conversion. Her interleaved copy, mentioned by her son above, was crowded with neat corrections and additions, ranging from commas to long unpublished letters. One of the most urgent and least refreshful problems which she faced was the accurate dating of parts of the correspondence. In this minor science she acquired remarkable facility and certainty. Give her a detached fragment of a letter, and she would soon get it into its place: it yielded to her application of contemporary directories, weather records, allusions political, dramatic, commercial, personal, and of handwriting with its variations.

The question of text as a whole found her not less ingenious and enterprising. Known or unknown, an autograph letter of Lamb's or of his circle had only to appear in the 'rooms,' or in the booksellers' catalogues for her to obtain an accurate copy. Her transcript would reproduce, when chance permitted, the handwriting of Lamb, and she did not miss the significant mannerisms in it—those subtle emphases and suggestions which Lamb conveyed to his reader's eye. When the full and perfect text of a letter was in her book, she was really no more than midway in her delightful task, for then she proceeded to catch all the allusions. For her Lamb's biography meant also the biographies of those with whom he was friend or friendly. Accordingly, as the result of patient correspondence and reading, many names at first sight meaning only that Lamb had some use for them became personalities and occupied pages of her subsidiary note-books. In this point Mrs. Anderson's exemplary humanity, and understanding of Lamb's humanity, was very effective. She realized that to such a man the world was not merely a set of writers, and that his friendships included many persons of no moment in the literary spectacle. So, difficult though it was, she reconstructed an obscure microcosm of one hundred and more years since. The mists withdrew as she worked.

I have before me an instance of this revival of quite forgotten friends of Lamb. Hearing that a copious list of Christ's Hospital worthies was in preparation, Mrs. Anderson sent a paper of suggested candidates. It contains particulars of Vincent Rice, William Winch, Henry Woodthorpe senior, Henry Woodthorpe junior, Edward Rice, Sam

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Bloxam, Edward Isola, Frederick Isola, and others. These names may resemble some that Lamb puzzles us with in the very first essay of *Elia*, but their importance is from Lamb, and one word will show it: to him William Winch was Billy Winch. Biographers have yet to expand that merry mention.

In 1923, when it appeared that the centenary of *Elia* arrived, I asked Mrs. Anderson how she would celebrate the occasion. Her reply was that *Elia* surely first appeared before the end of 1822; and, that little technical matter apart, she intended to be very retiring, among Lamb's disciples, until the centenary of Lamb's death—the present year. Her own sudden death in 1924 meant that considerable areas of research which she had in her further view have never been explored or thought about. Great as was the amount of work she had accomplished, I felt that she was not yet in her full stride, but nearing it. The splendid design was still opening before her.

A visit to Mrs. Anderson was anything but antiquarian. The word 'exquisite' in its best meaning always belonged to her presence. She united a firmness of character with a gentleness that one almost feared. Her life was, to my sense, as a Grecian urn for poise and accomplishment; there was a brightness all about her, and her house was beautiful. Her love for Charles Lamb was not displayed. She might hint at it, in her general talk, but with a disguising humour; and, true, a careless word about Lamb would bring something of a frown to her fine forehead. Meanwhile, she lived most generously for others. Mr. F. A. Downing writes: 'To every good cause in her neighbourhood she gave of herself, and one of her last activities was the compilation of the first Directory of Woldingham. She procured the advertisements, and wrote all the original matter, and the sale of the directory brought a very substantial contribution to local hospital funds. The duties of her household were on her own shoulders, and all her other activities were subordinated to these.'

Something has been seen of what she published. She had no ambitions as a writer, but 'communicated' things after the old fashion. In the correspondence columns of *The Times Literary Supplement*, in *Notes and Queries*, and *The Bookman*, as well as the *London Mercury*, these occasional writings may be found; and she gave *The Blue* (the magazine of Lamb's old school) a capital account of Leigh Hunt's collection of locks of hair. (Chess-players may remember her not only as a writer, but also as a humorous artist.) But her contribution to literature, enough to ensure her a perpetual remembrance, is embodied in the present volumes, the appearance of which arouses only one regret—that she did not live to see them.

It is a pity that the note-books filled with new Lamb material

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by the late Major Butterworth cannot be traced. He and I never met, but he wrote to me several letters regarding my shortcomings, and was usually right. And then, I am told, his enthusiasm for Lamb paled and he worshipped at another shrine, but whether he destroyed his earlier collections, or they repose in oblivion, I cannot say.

I have to thank also, for assistance in annotation, Mr. Vernon Rendall, who has read the proofs and compiled the Index, a model of its kind; Mr. Blunden, whose wide knowledge has been generously put at my service; Mr. Ralph C. Beals of New York, a mine of information; Mr. Stephen Gwynn, Mr. E. V. Knox, and Mr. E. V. Rieu, for assistance in translating from the Latin; and I must also mention the late J. A. Rutter, whose careful scrutiny of the text of my 1912 edition led to many revised readings which, until now, there has been no opportunity to adopt. It would be not only ungenerous, but misleading, if I did not acknowledge my debt to the vigilance and erudition of Mr. Charles Lee, the reader at the Temple Press, who has dealt with so many queries. I should add that without the untiring clerical assistance of Mrs. Norah Nicholls and Miss Maud Bigge the appearance of the work would have been long delayed.

E. V. L.

July 1935.

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The sources from which many of the letters are obtained are indicated in the list as follows: British Museum, B.M.; Drexel Institute, D.I.; Dr. Williams's Library, Dr. W.; University of Edinburgh, E.U.; Folger Shakespeare Library, F.S.; Harvard College Library, H.C.; Henry E. Huntington Library (Pasadena), H.E.H.; Historical Society of Pennsylvania, H.S.P.; Library of the State University, Iowa, I.S.U.; Maine Historical Society, M.H.S.; Pierpont Morgan Library, P.M.; University of Texas, T.U.; Victoria and Albert Museum, V. & A.; Washington University Library, W.U.; Yale University Library, Y.U.

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[Postmark 27th May, 1796.]

DEAR C——

Make yourself perfectly easy about May. I paid his bill, when I sent your clothes. I was flush of money, and am so still to all the purposes of a single life, so give yourself no further concern about it. The money would be superfluous to me, if I had it.

With regard to Allen,—the woman he has married has some money, I have heard about £200 a year, enough for the maintenance of herself & children, one of whom is a girl nine years old! so Allen has dipt betimes into the cares of a family. I very seldom see him, & do not know whether he has given up the Westminster hospital.

When Southey becomes as modest as his predecessor Milton, and publishes his Epics in duodecimo, I will read 'em,—a Guinea a book is somewhat exorbitant, nor have I the opportunity of borrowing the Work. The extracts from it in the Monthly Review, and the short passages in your Watchman seem to me much superior to any thing in his partnership account with Lovell.

Your poems I shall procure forthwith. There were noble lines in what you inserted in one of your Numbers from Religious Musings, but I thought them elaborate. I am somewhat glad you have given up that Paper—it must have been dry, unprofitable, and of 'dissonant mood' to your disposition. I wish you success in all your undertakings, and am glad to hear you are employed about the Evidences of Religion. There is need of multiplying such books an hundred fold in this philosophical age to *prevent* converts to Atheism, for they seem too tough disputants to meddle with afterwards. I am sincerely sorry for Allen, as a family man particularly.

Le Grice is gone to make puns in Cornwall. He has got a tutorship to a young boy, living with his Mother, a widow Lady. He will of course initiate him quickly in 'whatsoever things are lovely, honorable, and of good report.' He has cut Miss Hunt completely,—the poor Girl is very ill on the Occasion, but he

laughs at it, and justifies himself by saying, 'she does not see him laugh.' Coleridge, I know not what suffering scenes you have gone through at Bristol—my life has been somewhat diversified of late. The 6 weeks that finished last year and began this your very humble servant spent very agreeably in a mad house at Hoxton—I am got somewhat rational now, and don't bite any one. But mad I was—and many a vagary my imagination played with me, enough to make a volume if all told.

My Sonnets I have extended to the number of nine since I saw you, and will some day communicate to you.

I am beginning a poem in blank verse, which if I finish I publish.

White is on the eve of publishing (he took the hint from Vortigern) Original letters of Falstaff, Shallow &c—, a copy you shall have when it comes out. They are without exception the best imitations I ever saw.

Coleridge, it may convince you of my regards for you when I tell you my head ran on you in my madness, as much almost as on another Person, who I am inclined to think was the more immediate cause of my temporary frenzy.

The sonnet I send you has small merit as poetry but you will be curious to read it when I tell you it was written in my prison-house in one of my lucid Intervals.

TO MY SISTER

If from my lips some angry accents fell,
 Peevish complaint, or harsh reproof unkind,
 'Twas but the error of a sickly mind,
 And troubled thoughts, clouding the purer well,
 And waters clear, of Reason; and for me,
 Let this my verse the poor atonement be,
 My verse, which thou to praise wast ever inclined
 Too highly, and with a partial eye to see
 No blemish: thou to me didst ever shew
 Fondest affection, and woud'st oftentimes lend
 An ear to the desponding love sick lay,
 Weeping my sorrows with me, who repay
 But ill the mighty debt of love I owe,
 Mary, to thee, my sister and my friend.

With these lines, and with that sister's kindest remembrances to C—, I conclude—

Yours sincerely

LAMB.

Your *Conciones ad populum* are the most eloquent politics that ever came in my way.

Write, when convenient—not as a task, for there is nothing in this letter to answer.

You may inclose under cover to me at the India house what letters you please, for they come post free.

We cannot send our remembrances to Mrs. C—— not having seen her, but believe me our best good wishes attend you both.

My civic and poetic compts to Southey if at Bristol.—Why, he is a very Leviathan of Bards—the small minnow I—

[This is the earliest letter written by Charles Lamb that has come down to us. On 10th February 1796, he had become twenty-one, and was now living at 7 Little Queen Street (since lost beneath the site of Holy Trinity Church in Kingsway) with his father, mother, Sarah Lamb (known as Aunt Hetty), Mary Lamb, his sister, and, possibly, John Lamb, his elder brother. John Lamb, senior, was doing nothing and had, I think, already begun to break up: his old master, Samuel Salt, had died in February 1792. John Lamb (born 5th June 1763) had a clerkship at the South-Sea House; Charles Lamb had begun his long period of service in the India House; and Mary Lamb (born 3rd December 1764) was occupied as a mantua-maker.

At the time of this letter Coleridge was twenty-three; he would be twenty-four on 21st October. His military experiences over, he had married Sara Fricker on 4th October 1795 (a month before Southey married her sister Edith), and was living at Bristol, on Redcliffe Hill. The first number of the *Watchman* was dated 1st March 1796; on 13th May 1796, it came to an end. On 16th April 1796, Joseph Cottle of Bristol, of whom later we shall hear more, had issued Coleridge's *Poems on Various Subjects*, containing also four 'effusions' by Charles Lamb (Nos. VII, XI, XII, and XIII), and the *Religious Musings*. Southey, on bad terms with Coleridge, partly on account of Southey's abandonment of Pantisocracy, had recently returned from Lisbon. His *Joan of Arc* had just been published by Cottle in quarto at a guinea. Previously he had collaborated in *The Fall of Robespierre*, 1794, with Coleridge and Robert Lovell. Each, one evening, had set forth to write an act by the next. Southey and Lovell did so, but Coleridge brought only a part of his. Lovell's being useless, Southey rewrote his act, Coleridge finished his at leisure, and the result was published at Cambridge by Coleridge as a pamphlet and appears among his works. Robert Lovell (1770?-96) had also been associated with Coleridge and Southey in their Pantisocratic dreams. Having married Mary Fricker, he was their brother-in-law. When, in 1795, Southey and Lovell had published a joint volume of *Poems*, Southey took the pseudonym of Bion and Lovell of Moschus.

May was the landlord of the 'Salutation and Cat' in Newgate Street where Coleridge had stayed and Lamb had made merry with him. We must suppose that when Coleridge quitted this inn in January 1795, he was unable to pay his

bill, and therefore had to leave his luggage behind. Cottle's story of Coleridge being offered free lodging by a London innkeeper, if he would only talk and talk, must then either be a pretty invention or apply to another landlord, possibly the host of the 'Angel' in Butcher Hall Street.

Allen was Robert Allen, a schoolfellow of Lamb and Coleridge, and Coleridge's first friend. He was born on 18th October 1772. Both Lamb and Leigh Hunt tell good stories of him at Christ's Hospital, Lamb in *Elia* and Hunt in his *Autobiography*. From Christ's Hospital he went to University College, Oxford, and it was he who introduced Coleridge and Hucks to Southey in 1794. Probably, according to the late E. H. Coleridge, it was he who brought Coleridge and John Stoddart (afterwards Sir John, and Hazlitt's brother-in-law) together. On leaving Oxford he seems to have gone to Westminster to learn surgery, and in 1797 he was appointed deputy-surgeon to the 2nd Royals, then in Portugal. He married a widow with children; at some time later took to journalism, as Lamb's reference in the *Elia* essay on 'Newspapers' tells us; and he died of apoplexy in 1805.

Coleridge's employment on the *Evidences of Religion*, whatever it may have been, did not reach print.

Le Grice was Charles Valentine Le Grice (1773-1858), an old Christ's Hospitaler and Grecian (see Lamb's *Elia* essays on 'Christ's Hospital' and 'Grace before Meat'). He passed to Trinity College, Cambridge. He left in 1796 and became tutor to William John Godolphin Nicholls of Trereife, near Penzance, the only son of a widowed mother. Le Grice was ordained in 1798, married Mrs. Nicholls in 1799, and was perpetual curate of Madron, Penzance, 1806-31. He was a witty, rebellious character, who never fulfilled the promise of his early days. It has been conjectured that his skill in punning awakened Lamb's ambition in that direction. Le Grice's recollections of Lamb were included by Talfourd in the *Memorials*, and his recollections of Coleridge were printed in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, December 1834. I know nothing of Miss Hunt.

Of Lamb's confinement in a madhouse we know no more than is here told. It is conjectured that 'another person' to whom he refers was Ann Simmons, a girl at Widford in Hertfordshire, where his maternal grandmother lived, for whom he had an attachment that had been discouraged, if not forbidden, by her friends. This is the only attack of the kind that Lamb is known to have suffered. He once told Coleridge that during his illness he sometimes believed himself to be Young Norval in Home's *Douglas*. It is possible that the asylum was Balmes House, illustrated in Walford's *Old and New London*.

The poem in blank verse was, we learn in a subsequent letter, *The Grandame*, or possibly an autobiographical work of which *The Grandame* is the only portion that survived.

White was James White (1775-1820), an old Christ's Hospitaler, and a friend and almost exact contemporary of Lamb. Lamb, who first kindled his enthusiasm for Shakespeare, was, it is stated by Southey and J. M. Gutch, involved in the *Original Letters, &c., of Sir John Falstaff and his Friends*, which appeared in 1796. The dedication—to Master Samuel Irelande, meaning William Henry Ireland (who sometimes took his father's name Samuel), the

forger of the pretended Shakespearian play *Vortigern*, produced at Drury Lane earlier in the year—is quite in Lamb's manner. On the other hand I have seen, in Kentucky, the copy of the book presented by White to Lamb, with the inscription, 'From the Author'; and surely, if Lamb had been a collaborator, that fact would have been acknowledged. White's immortality rests, however, not upon *Falstaff's Letters*, but upon the character-sketch of him in the *Elia* essay 'The Praise of Chimney-Sweepers.'

The sonnet *To my Sister* was printed, with slight alterations, by Lamb in Coleridge's *Poems*, second edition, 1797, and again in Lamb's *Works*, 1818.

Coleridge's *Conciones ad Populum* ; or, *Addresses to the People*, had been published at Bristol in November 1795.]

2. TO S. T. COLERIDGE

[Probably begun either on *Tuesday, 24th May*, or
Tuesday, 31st May 1796. Postmark 1st June.]

I am in such violent pain with the head ach that I am fit for nothing but transcribing, scarce for that. When I get your poems, and the Joan of Arc, I will exercise my presumption in giving you my opinion of 'em. The mail does not come in before tomorrow (Wednesday) morning. The following sonnet was composed during a walk down into Hertfordshire early in last Summer.

The lord of light shakes off his drowsyhed.¹
 Fresh from his couch up springs the lusty Sun,
 And girds himself his mighty race to run.
 Meantime, by truant love of rambling led,
 I turn my back on thy detested walls,
 Proud City, and thy sons I leave behind,
 A selfish, sordid, money-getting kind,
 Who shut their ears when holy Freedom calls.
 I pass not thee so lightly, humble spire,
 That mindest me of many a pleasure gone,
 Of merriest days, of love and Islington,
 Kindling anew the flames of past desire;
 And I shall muse on thee, slow journeying on,
 To the green plains of pleasant Hertfordshire.

The last line is a copy of Bowles's, 'to the green hamlet in the peaceful plain.' Your ears are not so very fastidious—many people would not like words so prosaic and familiar in a sonnet as Islington and Hertfordshire. The next was written within a

¹ Drowsyhed I have met with I think in Spencer. Tis an old thing, but it rhymes with led & rhyming covers a multitude of licences.

day or two of the last, on revisiting a spot where the scene was laid of my 1st sonnet that 'mock'd my step with many a lonely glade.'

When last I roved these winding wood-walks green,
 Green winding walks, and pathways shady-sweet,
 Oftimes would Anna seek the silent scene,
 Shrouding her beauties in the lone retreat.
 No more I hear her footsteps in the shade;
 Her image only in these pleasant ways
 Meets me self-wandering where in better days
 I held free converse with my fair-hair'd maid.
 I pass'd the little cottage, which she loved,
 The cottage which did once my all contain:
 It spake of days that ne'er must come again,
 Spake to my heart and much my heart was moved.
 'Now fair befall thee, gentle maid,' said I,
 And from the cottage turn'd me, with a sigh.

The next retains a few lines from a sonnet of mine, which you once remarked had no 'body of thought' in it. I agree with you, but have preserved a part of it, and it runs thus. I flatter myself you will like it.

A timid grace sits trembling in her Eye,
 As loth to meet the rudeness of men's sight,
 Yet shedding a delicious lunar light,
 That steeps in kind oblivious extacy
 The care-craz'd mind, like some still melody;
 Speaking most plain the thoughts which do possess
 Her gentle sprite, peace and meek quietness,
 And innocent loves,¹ and maiden purity.
 A look whereof might heal the cruel smart
 Of changed friends, or fortune's wrongs unkind;
 Might to sweet deeds of mercy move the heart
 Of him, who hates his brethren of mankind.
 Turned are those beams from me, who fondly yet
 Past joys, vain loves, and buried hopes regret.

The next and last I value most of all. 'Twas composed close upon the heels of the last in that very wood I had in mind when I wrote 'Methinks how dainty sweet.'

We were two pretty babes, the youngest she,
 The youngest and the loveliest far, I ween,
 And INNOCENCE her name. The time has been,
 We two did love each other's company;

¹ Cowley uses this phrase with a somewhat different meaning: I meant loves of relatives, friends, &c.

Time was, we two had wept to have been apart.
 But when, with shew of seeming good beguil'd,
 I left the garb and manners of a child,
 And my first love for man's society,
 Defiling with the world my virgin heart,
 My loved companion dropt a tear, and fled,
 And hid in deepest shades her awful head.
 Beloved, who can tell me where Thou art,
 In what delicious Eden to be found,
 That I may seek thee the wide world around.

Since writing it, I have found in a poem by Hamilton of Bangour, these 2 lines to happiness

Nun sober and devout, where art thou fled
 To hide in shades thy meek contented head.

Lines eminently beautiful, but I do not remember having re'd 'em previously, for the credit of my 10th and 11th lines. Parnell has 2 lines (which probably suggested the *above*), to Contentment

Whither ah! whither art thou fled,
 To hide thy meek contented head.¹

Cowley's exquisite Elegy on the death of his friend Harvey suggested the phrase of 'we two'

'Was there a tree that did not know
 The love betwixt us two?———'

So much for acknowledged plagiarisms, the confession of which I know not whether it has more of vanity or modesty in it. As to my blank verse I am so dismally slow and steril of ideas (I speak from my heart) that I much question if it will ever come to any issue. I have hitherto only hammered out a few indepen[den]t unconnected snatches, not in a capacity to be sent. I am very ill, and will rest till I have read your poems—for which I am very thankful. I have one more favour to beg of you, that you never mention Mr. May's affair in any sort, much less *think* of repaying. Are we not flocci-nauci-what-d'ye-call-em-ists?

We have just learnd, that my poor brother has had a sad accident: a large stone blown down by yesterday's high wind has bruised his leg in a most shocking manner—he is under the care of Cruikshanks. Coleridge, there are 10,000 objections against

¹ An odd epithet for contentment in a poet so poetical as Parnell.

my paying you a visit at Bristol—it cannot be, else—but in this world 'tis better not to think too much of pleasant possibles, that we may not be out of humour with present insipids. Should any thing bring you to London, you will recollect No. 7, Little Queen St. Holborn.

I shall be too ill to call on Wordsworth myself but will take care to transmit him his poem, when I have read it. I saw Le Grice the day before his departure, and mentioned incidentally his 'teaching the young idea how to shoot'—knowing him and the probability there is of people having a propensity to pun in his company you will not wonder that we both stumbled on the same pun at once, he eagerly anticipating me,—'he would teach him to shoot!'—Poor Le Grice! if wit alone could entitle a man to respect, &c. He has written a very witty little pamphlet lately, satirical upon college declamations; when I send White's book, I will add that.

I am sorry there should be any difference between you and Southey. 'Between you two there should be peace,' tho' I must say I have borne him no good will since he spirited you away from among us. What is become of Moschus? You sported some of his sublimities, I see, in your Watchman. Very decent things. So much for to-night from your afflicted headache sorethroatey, humble Servant C. Lamb—Tuesday night——.

Of your Watchmen, the Review of Burke was the best prose. I augurd great things from the 1st number. There is some exquisite poetry interspersed. I have re-read the extract from the Religious musings and retract whatever invidious there was in my censure of it as elaborate. There are times when one is not in a disposition thoroughly to relish good writing. I have re-read it in a more favourable moment and hesitate not to pronounce it sublime. If there be any thing in it approaches to tumidity (which I meant not to infer in elaborate: I meant simply labor'd) it is the Gigantic hyperbole by which you describe the Evils of existing society. Snakes, Lions, hyenas and behemoths, is carrying your resentment beyond bounds. The pictures of the Simoom, of frenzy and ruin, of the whore of Babylon and the cry of the foul spirits disherited of Earth and the strange beatitude which the good man shall recognise in heaven—as well

as the particularizing of the children of wretchedness—(I have unconsciously included every part of it) form a variety of uniform excellence. I hunger and thirst to read the poem complete. That is a capital line in your 6th no.: ‘this dark frieze-coated, hoarse, teeth-chattering Month’—they are exactly such epithets as Burns would have stumbled on, whose poem on the ploughed up daisy you seem to have had in mind. Your complaint that [of] your readers some thought there was too much, some too little, original matter in your Nos., reminds me of poor dead Parsons in the Critic—‘too little incident! Give me leave to tell you, Sir, there is too much incident.’ I had like to have forgot thanking you for that exquisite little morsel the 1st Slavonian Song. The expression in the 2d ‘more happy to be unhappy in hell’—is it not very quaint? Accept my thanks in common with those of all who love good poetry for the Braes of Yarrow. I congratulate you on the enemies you must have made by your splendid invective against the barterers in ‘human flesh and sinews.’ Coleridge, you will rejoice to hear that Cowper is recovered from his lunacy, and is employ’d on his translation of the Italian &c. poems of Milton, for an edition where Fuseli presides as designer. Coleridge, to an idler like myself to write and receive letters are both very pleasant, but I wish not to break in upon your valuable time by expecting to hear very frequently from you. Reserve that obligation for your moments of lassitude, when you have nothing else to do; for your loco-restive and all your idle propensities of course have given way to the duties of providing for a family. The mail is come in but no parcel, yet this is Tuesday. Farewell then till to morrow, for a nich and a nook I must leave for criticisms. By the way I hope you do not send your own only copy of Joan of Arc; I will in that case return it immediately.

Your parcel is come, you have been *lavish* of your presents. Wordsworth’s poem I have hurried thro not without delight. Poor Lovell! my heart almost accuses me for the light manner I spoke of him above, not dreaming of his death. My heart bleeds for your accumulated troubles, God send you thro’ ’em with patience. I conjure you dream not that I will ever think of being repaid! the very word is galling to the ears. I have read

all your Rel: Musings with uninterrupted feelings of profound admiration. You may safely rest your fame on it. The best remain^s things are what I have before read, and they lose nothing by my recollection of your manner of reciting 'em, for I too bear in mind 'the voice, the look' of absent friends, and can occasionally mimic their manner for the amusement of those who have seen 'em. Your impassioned manner of recitation I can recall at any time to mine own heart, and to the ears of the bystanders. I rather wish you had left the monody on C. concluding as it did abruptly. It had more of unity.—The conclusion of your R Musings I fear will entitle you to the reproof of your Beloved woman, who wisely will not suffer your fancy to run riot, but bids you walk humbly with your God. The very last words 'I exercise my young noviciate tho' in ministeries of heart-stirring song,' tho' not now new to me, cannot be enough admired. To speak politely, they are a well turned compliment to Poetry. I hasten to read Joan of Arc, &c. I have read your lines at the begin^s of 2d book, they are worthy of Milton, but in my mind yield to your Rel Mus^{ss}. I shall read the whole carefully and in some future letter take the liberty to particularize my opinions of it. Of what is new to me among your poems next to the Musings, that beginning 'My Pensive Sara' gave me most pleasure: the lines in it I just alluded to are most exquisite—they made my sister and self smile, as conveying a pleasing picture of Mrs. C. chequing your wild wandrings, which we were so fond of hearing you indulge when among us. It has endeared us more than any thing to your good Lady; and your own self-reproof that follows delighted us. 'Tis a charming poem throughout. (You have well remarked that 'charming, admirable, exquisite' are words expressive of feelings, more than conveying of ideas, else I might plead very well want of room in my paper as excuse for generalizing.) I want room to tell you how we are charmed with your verses in the manner of Spencer, &c. &c. &c. &c. &c. I am glad you resume the Watchman—change the name, leave out all articles of News, and whatever things are peculiar to News Papers, and confine yourself to Ethics, verse, criticism, or, rather do not confine yourself. Let your plan be as diffuse as the Spectator, and I'll answer for it the work prospers. If I am vain enough to think I can be a contributor,

rely on my inclinations. Coleridge, in reading your *Rs Musings* I felt a transient superiority over you: I *have* seen Priestly. I love to see his name repeated in your writings. I love and honor him almost profanely. You would be charmed with his *sermons*, if you never read 'em.—You have doubtless read his books, illustrative of the doctrine of Necessity. Prefixed to a late work of his, in answer to Paine, there is a preface, given [*? giving*] an account of the Man and his services to Men, written by Lindsey, his dearest friend,—well worth your reading.

Tuesday Eve.—Forgive my prolixity, which is yet too brief for all I could wish to say.—God give you comfort and all that are of your household.—Our loves and best good wishes to Mrs. C.

C. LAMB.

[The Hertfordshire sonnet was printed in the *Monthly Magazine* for December 1797, and not reprinted by Lamb.

The sonnet that 'mock'd my step with many a lonely glade' is that beginning:

'Was it some sweet device of Faery'

which had been printed in Coleridge's *Poems*, 1796. The second, third, and fourth of the sonnets that are copied in this letter were printed in the second edition of Coleridge's *Poems*, 1797. Anna is generally supposed to be Ann Simmons, referred to in the previous note.

Concerning 'Flocci-nauci-what-d'ye-call-em-ists,' Canon Ainger has the following interesting note: "'Flocci, nauci" is the beginning of a rule in the old Latin grammars, containing a list of words signifying "of no account," *floccus* being a lock of wool, and *naucus* a trifle. Lamb was recalling a sentence in one of Shenstone's letters: "I loved him for nothing so much as his flocci-nauci-nihili-pili-fication of money.'" But 'Pantisocratists' was, of course, the word that Lamb was shadowing. Pantisocracy, however—the new order of common living and high thinking, to be established on the banks of the Susquehanna by Coleridge, Southey, Favell, Burnett, and others—was already dead.

William Cumberland Cruikshank, the anatomist, who attended Lamb's brother, had attended Dr. Johnson in his last illness.

Le Grice's pamphlet was *A General Theorem for A ***** Coll. Declamation*, with copious notes by Gronovius, 1796—Le Grice having himself supplied a Prize Declamation in 1794.

Southey and Coleridge had been on somewhat strained terms for some time; possibly, as I have said in a previous note, owing to Southey's abandonment of Utopian fervour, which anticipated Coleridge's by some months. Also, to marry sisters does not always lead to serenity. The spiriting away of Coleridge had been effected by Southey in January 1795, when he found Coleridge at the 'Angel' in Butcher Hall Street, and bore him back to Bristol and the forlorn Sara Fricker, and away from Lamb, journalism, and egg-hot.

Moschus was, as we have seen, Robert Lovell. No. V of the *Watchman* contained sonnets by him.

The review of Burke's *Letter to a Noble Lord* was in No. I of the *Watchman*.—The passage from *Religious Musings*, under the title 'The Present State of Society,' was in No. II—extending from line 260 to 357.¹—The 'capital line' in No. VI is in the poem, *Lines on Observing a Blossom on the First of February* 1796.—Poor dead Parsons would be William Parsons (1736–95), the original Sir Fretful Plagiary in Sheridan's *Critic*. Lamb praises him in his essay on the 'Artificial Comedy.'—In No. IX of the *Watchman* were prose paraphrases of three Slavonian songs, the first being 'Song of a Female Orphan,' and the second, 'Song of the Haymakers.'—John Logan's *Braes of Yarrow* had been quoted in No. III as 'the most exquisite performance in our language.'—The invective against 'the barterers' refers to the denunciation of the slave trade in No. IV of the *Watchman*.

Cowper's recovery was only partial; and he was seldom rightly himself after 1793. The edition of Milton had been begun about 1790. It was never finished as originally intended; but Fuseli completed forty pictures, which were exhibited in 1799. An edition of Cowper's translations, with designs by Flaxman, was published in 1808, and of Cowper's complete Milton in 1810.

Wordsworth. This is the first mention of the great poet, with whom later Lamb was to become friendly. At that time Wordsworth was twenty-six, only five years Lamb's senior. His French revolutionary period over, he had settled, in 1795, with his sister Dorothy, at Racedown, on the borders of Dorset and Somerset, where, in June 1797, Coleridge, whom he had first met a year or so before, probably at Bristol, visited him. Later in the year the Wordsworths, in order to be nearer Coleridge, moved to Alfoxden, three miles from Nether Stowey, and it was there that the partnership, which was in 1798 to produce *Lyrical Ballads*, began. Wordsworth's poem would be *Guilt and Sorrow*, of which a portion was printed in *Lyrical Ballads*, 1798, and the whole published in 1842.

Coleridge's *Monody on Chatterton*, the first piece in his *Poems on Various Subjects*, 1796, had been written originally at Christ's Hospital, 1790: it continued to be much altered before the final version.

The two lines from *Religious Musings* are not the last, but the beginning of the last passage.

Coleridge contributed between three and four hundred lines to Book II of Southey's *Joan of Arc*, as we shall see later. The poem beginning 'My Pensive Sara' was *Effusion* 35, afterwards called *The Eolian Harp*, and the lines to which Lamb refers are these, following upon Coleridge's description of how fitting phantasies traverse his indolent and passive brain:

'But thy more serious eye a mild reproof
Darts, O beloved Woman! nor such thoughts
Dim and unhallow'd dost thou not reject,
And biddest me walk humbly with my God.'

¹ These lines were 279–378 1st ed.; 264–363 2nd ed.

The plan to resume the *Watchman* came to nothing.

Joseph Priestley (1733–1804), the theologian, at this time the object of Lamb's adoration, was one of the fathers of Unitarianism, a creed in which Lamb had been brought up under the influence of his Aunt Hetty. Coleridge, as a supporter of one of Priestley's allies, William Frend of Cambridge, and as a convinced Unitarian, was also an admirer of Priestley, concerning whom and the Birmingham riots of 1791 there is a fine passage in *Religious Musings*, while one of the sonnets of the 1796 volume was addressed to him: circumstances which Lamb had in mind when mentioning him in this letter. Lamb had probably seen Priestley at the Gravel Pit Chapel, Hackney, where he became morning preacher in December 1791, remaining there until March 1794. Thenceforward he lived in America. His *Institutes of Natural and Revealed Religion* appeared between 1772 and 1774. The other work referred to is *Letters to the Philosophers and Politicians of France*, newly edited by Theophilus Lindsey, the Unitarian, as *An Answer to Mr. Paine's 'Age of Reason,'* 1795.]

3. TO S. T. COLERIDGE

[Begun *Wednesday, 8th June*. Dated on address:
'*Friday, 10th June,*' 1796.]

With Joan of Arc I have been delighted, amazed. I had not presumed to expect any thing of such excellence from Southey. Why the poem is alone sufficient to redeem the character of the age we live in from the imputation of degenerating in Poetry, were there no such beings extant as Burns and Bowles, Cowper and——fill up the blank how you please, I say nothing. The subject is well chosen. It opens well. To become more particular, I will notice in their order a few passages that chiefly struck me on perusal. Page 26 'Fierce and terrible Benevolence!' is a phrase full of grandeur and originality. The whole context made me feel *possess'd*, even like Joan herself. Page 28, 'it is most horrible with the keen sword to gore the finely fibred human frame' and what follows pleased me mightily. In the 2d Book the first forty lines, in particular, are majestic and high-sounding. Indeed the whole vision of the palace of Ambition and what follows are supremely excellent. Your simile of the Laplander 'by Niemi's lake Or Balda Zhiok, or the mossy stone Of Solfar Kapper'—will bear comparison with any in Milton for fullness of circumstance and lofty-pacedness of Versification. Southey's similes, tho' many of 'em are capital, are all inferior. In one of his books the simile of the Oak in the Storm occurs I

think four times! To return, the light in which you view the heathen deities is accurate and beautiful. Southey's personifications in this book are so many fine and faultless pictures. I was much pleased with your manner of accounting for the reason why Monarchs take delight in War. At the 447th line you have placed Prophets and Enthusiasts cheek by jowl, on too intimate a footing for the dignity of the former. Necessarian-like-speaking it is correct. Page 98 'Dead is the Douglas, cold thy warrior frame, illustrious Buchan' &c are of kindred excellence with Gray's 'Cold is Cadwallo's tongue' &c. How famously the Maid baffles the Doctors, Seraphic and Irrefragable, 'with all their trumpery!' 126 page, the procession, the appearances of the Maid, of the Bastard son of Orleans and of Tremouille, are full of fire and fancy, and exquisite melody of versification. The personifications from line 303 to 309 in the heat of the battle had better been omitted, they are not very striking and only encumber. The converse which Joan and Conrade hold on the Banks of the Loire is altogether beautiful. Page 313, the conjecture that in Dreams 'all things are that seem' is one of those conceits which the Poet delights to admit into his creed—a creed, by the way, more marvellous and mystic than ever Athanasius dream'd of. Page 315, I need only *mention* those lines ending with 'She saw a serpent gnawing at her heart'!!! They are good imitative lines 'he toild and toild, of toil to reap no end, but endless toil and never ending woe.' 347 page, Cruelty is such as Hogarth might have painted her. Page 361, all the passage about Love (where he seems to confound conjugal love with Creating and Preserving love) is very confused and sickens me with a load of useless personifications. Else that 9th Book is the finest in the volume, an exquisite combination of the ludicrous and the terrible,—I have never read either, even in translation, but such as I conceive to be the manner of Dante and Ariosto. The 10th book is the most languid. On the whole, considering the celerity wherewith the poem was finish'd, I was astonish'd at the infrequency of weak lines. I had expected to find it verbose. Joan, I think, does too little in Battle—Dunois, perhaps, the same—Conrade too much. The anecdotes interspersed among the battles refresh the mind very agreeably, and I am delighted with the very many passages of simple pathos

abounding throughout the poem—passages which the author of 'Crazy Kate' might have written. Has not Master Southey spoke very slightly in his preface and disparagingly of Cowper's Homer?—what makes him reluctant to give Cowper his fame? And does not Southey use too often the expletives 'did' and 'does?' they have a good effect at times, but are too inconsiderable, or rather become blemishes, when they mark a style. On the whole, I expect Southey one day to rival Milton. I already deem him equal to Cowper, and superior to all living Poets besides. What says Coleridge? The 'Monody on Henderson' is *immensely good*; the rest of that little volume is *readable and above mediocrity*. I proceed to a more pleasant task,—pleasant because the poems are yours, pleasant because you impose the task on me, and pleasant, let me add, because it will confer a whimsical importance on me to sit in judgment upon your rhimes. First tho', let me thank you again and again in my own and my sister's name for your invitations. Nothing could give us more pleasure than to come, but (were there no other reasons) while my Brother's leg is so bad it is out of the question. Poor fellow, he is very feverish and light headed, but Cruikshanks has pronounced the symptoms favorable, and gives us every hope that there will be no need of amputation. God send, not. We are necessarily confined with him the afternoon and evening till very late, so that I am stealing a few minutes to write to you. Thank you for your frequent letters, you are the only correspondent and I might add the only friend I have in the world. I go no where and have no acquaintance. Slow of speech, and reserved of manners, no one seeks or cares for my society and I am left alone. Allen calls only occasionally, as tho' it were a duty rather, and seldom stays ten minutes. Then judge how thankful I am for your letters. Do not, however, burthen yourself with the correspondence. I trouble you again so soon, only in obedience to your injunctions. Complaints apart, proceed we to our task. I am called away to tea, thence must wait upon my brother, so must delay till to-morrow. Farewell—Wednesday.

Thursday. I will first notice what is new to me. 13th page. 'The thrilling tones that concentrate the soul' is a nervous line, and the 6 first lines of page 14 are very pretty. The 21st effusion

is a perfect thing. That in the manner of Spencer is very sweet, particularly at the close. The 35th effusion is most exquisite—that line in particular, ‘And tranquil muse upon tranquillity.’ It is the very reflex pleasure that distinguishes the tranquillity of a thinking being from that of a shepherd—a modern one I would be understood to mean—a Dametas; one that keeps other people’s sheep. Certainly, Coleridge, your letter from Shurton Bars has less merit than most things in your volume; personally, it may chime in best with your own feelings, and therefore you love it best. It has however great merit. In your 4th Epistle that is an exquisite paragraph and fancy-full of ‘A stream there is which rolls in lazy flow’ &c. &c. ‘Murmurs sweet undersong ’mid jasmine bowers’ is a sweet line and so are the 3 next. The concluding simile is far-fetch’d. ‘Tempest-honord’ is a quaintish phrase. Of the Monody on H., I will here only notice these lines, as superlatively excellent. That energetic one, ‘Shall I not praise thee, Scholar, Christian, friend,’ like to that beautiful climax of Shakspeare ‘King, Hamlet, Royal Dane, Father.’ ‘Yet memory turns from little men to thee!’ ‘and sported careless round their fellow child.’ The whole, I repeat it, is immensely good. Yours is a Poetical family. I was much surpriz’d and pleased to see the signature of Sara to that elegant composition, the 5th Epistle. I dare not *criticise* the Relig Musings, I like not to *select* any part where all is excellent. I can only admire; and thank you for it in the name of a Christian as well as a Lover of good Poetry. Only let me ask, is not that thought and those words in Young, ‘Stands in the Sun?’ or is it only such as Young in one of his *better moments* might have writ? ‘Believe, thou, O my Soul, Life is a vision, shadowy of truth, And vice and anguish and the wormy grave, Shapes of a dream!’ I thank you for these lines, in the name of a Necessarian, and for what follows in next paragraph in the name of a child of fancy. After all you can[not] nor ever will write any thing, with which I shall be so delighted as what I have heard yourself repeat. You came to Town, and I saw you at a time when your heart was yet bleeding with recent wounds. Like yourself, I was sore galled with disappointed Hope. You had ‘many an holy lay, that mourning, soothed the mourner on his way.’ I had ears of sympathy to drink them in, and they yet vibrate pleasant on the

sense. When I read in your little volume, your 19th Effusion, or the 28th or 29th, or what you call the 'Sigh,' I think I hear you again. I image to myself the little smoky room at the Salutation and Cat, where we have sat together thro' the winter nights, beguiling the cares of life with Poesy. When you left London, I felt a dismal void in my heart, I found myself cut off at one and the same time from two most dear to me. 'How blest with Ye the Path could I have trod of Quiet life.' In your conversation you had blended so many pleasant fancies, that they cheated me of my grief. But in your absence, the tide of melancholy rush'd in again, and did its worst Mischief by overwhelming my Reason. I have recoverd. But feel a stupor that makes me indifferent to the hopes and fears of this life. I sometimes wish to introduce a religious turn of mind, but habits are strong things, and my religious fervors are confined alas to some fleeting moments of occasional solitary devotion—A correspondence, opening with you, has roused me a little from my lethargy, and made me conscious of existence. Indulge me in it. I will not be very troublesome. At some future time I will amuse you with an account as full as my memory will permit of the strange turn my phrensy took. I look back upon it at times with a gloomy kind of Envy. For while it lasted I had many many hours of pure happiness. Dream not Coleridge, of having tasted all the grandeur and wildness of Fancy, till you have gone mad. All now seems to me vapid; comparatively so. Excuse this selfish digression.

Your monody is so superlatively excellent, that I can only wish it perfect, which I can't help feeling it is not quite. Indulge me in a few conjectures. What I am going to propose would make it more compress'd and I think more energetic, tho' I am sensible at the expence of many beautiful lines. Let it begin 'Is this the land of song-ennobled line,' and proceed to 'Otway's famish'd form.' Then 'thee Chatterton,' to 'blaze of Seraphim.' Then 'clad in nature's rich array,' to 'orient day'; then 'but soon the scathing lightning,' to 'blighted land.' Then 'Sublime of thought' to 'his bosom glows.' Then 'but soon upon his poor unsheltered head Did Penury her sickly Mildew shed, and soon are fled the charms of vernal Grace, and Joy's wild gleams that lightend o'er his face!' Then 'Youth of tumultuous soul' to

'sigh' as before. The rest may all stand down to 'gaze upon the waves below.' What follows now may come next, as detached verses, suggested by the Monody, rather than a part of it. They are indeed in themselves very sweet 'And we at sober eve would round thee throng, Hanging enraptured on thy stately song'—in particular perhaps. If I am obscure you may understand me by counting lines. I have proposed omitting 24 lines. I feel that thus compress it would gain energy, but think it most likely you will not agree with me, for who shall go about to bring opinions to the Bed of Procrustes and introduce among the Sons of Men a monotony of identical feelings. I only propose with diffidence. Reject, you, if you please, with as little remorse as you would the color of a coat or the pattern of a buckle where our fancies differ'd. The lines 'Friend to the friendless' &c. which you may think 'rudely disbranched' from the Chatterton will patch in with the Man of Ross, where they were once quite at Home, with 2 more which I recollect 'and o'er the dowried virgin's snowy cheek bad bridal love suffuse his blushes meek!' very beautiful. The Pixies is a perfect thing, and so are the lines on the spring, page 28. The Epitaph on an Infant, like a Jack of lanthorn, has danced about (or like Dr. Forster's scholars) out of the Morn Chron into the Watchman, and thence back into your Collection. It is very pretty, and you seem to think so, but, may be o'er looked its chief merit, that of filling up a whole page. I had once deem'd Sonnets of unrivalled use that way, but your epitaphs, I find, are the more diffuse. Edmund still holds its place among your best verses. 'Ah! fair delights' to 'roses round' in your Poem called Absence recall (none more forcibly) to my mind the tones in which you *recited* it. I will not notice in this tedious (to you) manner verses which have been so long delightful to me, and which you already know my opinion of. Of this kind are Bowles, Priestly, and that most exquisite and most Bowles-like of all, the 19th Effusion. It would have better ended with 'agony of care.' The last 2 lines are obvious and unnecessary and you need not now make 14 lines of it, now it is rechristend from a Sonnet to an Effusion. Schiller might have written the 20 Effusion. 'Tis worthy of him in any sense. I was glad to meet with those lines you sent me, when my Sister was so ill. I had lost the Copy, and I felt not a little proud at

seeing my name in your verse. The complaint of Ninathorna (1st stanza in particular) is the best, or only good imitation, of Ossian I ever saw—your restless gale excepted. ‘To an infant’ is most sweet—is not ‘foodful,’ tho’, very harsh! would not ‘dulcet’ fruit be less harsh, or some other friendly bi-syllable? In Edmund, ‘Frenzy fierce-eyed child,’ is not so well as frantic—tho’ that is an epithet adding nothing to the meaning. Slander *couching* was better than squatting. In the Man of Ross it *was* a better line thus ‘If ’neath this roof thy wine-cheer’d moments pass’ than as it stands now. Time nor nothing can reconcile me to the concluding 5 lines of Kosciusko: call it any thing you will but sublime. In my 12th Effusion I had rather have seen what I wrote myself, tho’ they bear no comparison with your exquisite lines ‘On rose-leaf’d beds amid your faery bowers,’ &c.—I love my sonnets because they are the reflected images of my own feelings at different times. To instance, in the 13th ‘How reason reel’d,’ &c.—are good lines but must spoil the whole with ME who know it is only a fiction of yours and that the rude dashings did in fact NOT ROCK me to REPOSE. I grant the same objection applies not to the former sonnet, but still I love my own feelings. They are dear to memory, tho’ they now and then wake a sigh or a tear. ‘Thinking on divers things foredone,’ I charge you, Col., spare my ewe lambs, and tho’ a Gentleman may borrow six lines in an epic poem (I should have no objection to borrow 500 and without acknowledging) still in a Sonnet—a personal poem—I do not ‘ask my friend the aiding verse.’ I would not wrong your feelings by proposing any improvements (did I think myself capable of suggesting ’em) in such personal poems as ‘Thou bleedest my poor heart,’—’od so, I am catchd, I have already done it—but that simile I propose abridging would not change the feeling or introduce any alien ones. Do you understand me? In the 28th however, and in the ‘Sigh’ and that composed at Clevedon, things that come from the heart direct, not by the medium of the fancy, I would not suggest an alteration. When my blank verse is finished, or any long fancy poems, ‘*propino tibi alterandum, cut-up-andum, abridge-andum,*’ just what you will with it—but spare my EWE LAMBS! That to Mrs. Siddons now you were welcome to improve, if it had been worth it. But I say unto you again, Col., spare my EWE LAMBS.

I must confess were they mine I should omit, in *Editione secundâ*, Effusions 2-3, because satiric, and below the dignity of the poet of Religious Musings, 5-7, half of the 8th, that written in early Youth, as far as 'Thousand eyes,'—tho' I part not unreluctantly with that lively line 'Chaste Joyance dancing in her bright-blue eyes' and one or 2 more just thereabouts. But I would substitute for it that sweet poem called 'Recollection' in the 5th No. of the Watchman, better I think than the remainder of this poem, tho' not differing materially. As the poem now stands it looks altogether confused. And do not omit those lines upon the 'early blossom,' in your 6th No. of the Watchman, and I would omit the 10th Effusion—or what would do better, alter and improve the last 4 lines. In fact, I suppose if they were mine I should *not* omit 'em. But your verse is for the most part so exquisite, that I like not to see aught of meaner matter mixed with it. Forgive my petulance and often, I fear, ill founded criticisms, and forgive me that I have, by this time, made your eyes and head ach with my long letter. But I cannot forego hastily the pleasure and pride of thus conversing with you.

You did not tell me whether I was to include the *Conciones ad Populum* in my remarks on your poems. They are not unfrequently sublime, and I think you could not do better than to turn 'em into verse,—if you have nothing else to do. Allen I am sorry to say is a *confirmed* Atheist. Stodart, or Stothard, a cold hearted well bred conceited disciple of Godwin, does him no good. His wife has several daughters (one of 'em as old as himself). Surely there is something unnatural in such a marriage. How I sympathise with you on the dull duty of a reviewer, and heartily damn with you Ned Evans and the Prosodist. I shall however wait impatiently for the articles in the *Crit. Rev.*, next month, because they are *yours*. Young Evans (W. Evans, a branch of a family you were once so intimate with) is come into our office, and sends his love to you. Coleridge, I devoutly wish that Fortune, who has made sport with you so long, may play one freak more, throw you into London, or some spot near it, and there snug-ify you for life. 'Tis a selfish but natural wish for me, cast as I am 'on life's wide plain, friend-less.' Are you acquainted with Bowles? I see, by his last *Elegy* (written at Bath), you are near neighbours. 'And I can think I can see the groves again—

was it the voice of thee—Twas not the voice of thee, my buried friend—who dries with her dark locks the tender tear—are touches as true to nature as any in his other Elegy, written at the hot wells, about poor Russell, &c.—You are doubtless acquainted with it.—Thursday.

I do not know that I entirely agree with you in your stricture upon my Sonnet to Innocence. To men whose hearts are not quite deadened by their commerce with the world, Innocence (no longer familiar) becomes an awful idea. So I felt when I wrote it. Your other censures (qualified and sweeten'd, tho', with praises somewhat extravagant) I perfectly coincide with. Yet I chuse to retain the word 'lunar'—indulge a 'lunatic' in his loyalty to his mistress the moon. I have just been reading a most pathetic copy of verses on Sophia Pringle, who was hanged and burn'd for coining. One of the strokes of pathos (which are very many, all somewhat obscure) is 'She lifted up her guilty forger to heaven.' A note explains by forger her right hand with which she forged or coined the base metal! For pathos read bathos. You have put me out of conceit with my blank verse by your Religious Musings. I think it will come to nothing. I do not like 'em enough to send 'em. I have just been reading a book, which I may be too partial to, as it was the delight of my childhood; but I will recommend it to you—it is 'Izaak Walton's Complete Angler!' All the scientific part you may omit in reading. The dialogue is very simple, full of pastoral beauties, and will charm you. Many pretty old verses are interspersed. This letter, which would be a week's work reading only, I do not wish you to answer in less than a month. I shall be richly content with a letter from you some day early in July—tho' if you get any how *settled* before then pray let me know it immediately—'twould give me such satisfaction. Concerning the unitarian chapel, the salary is the only scruple that the most rigid moralist would admit as valid. Concerning the tutorage—is not the salary low, and absence from your family unavoidable? London is the only fostering soil for Genius.

Nothing more occurs just now, so I will leave you in mercy one small white spot empty below, to repose your eyes upon, fatigued as they must be with the wilderness of words they have by this time painfully travell'd thro'. God love you, Coleridge,

and prosper you thro' life, tho' mine will be loss if your lot is to be cast at Bristol or at Nottingham or any where but London. Our loves to Mrs. C——

C. L.

[Southey's *Joan of Arc*, with contributions to Book II by Coleridge, had been published in quarto by Cottle. Coleridge contributed to Book II the first 450 lines, with the exception of 141-3, 148-222, 266-72, and 286-91. He subsequently took out his lines and gave them new shape as the poem *The Destiny of Nations*, printed in *Sibylline Leaves*, 1817. All subsequent editions of Southey's poem appeared without Coleridge's portion. The passages on page 26 and page 28 were Southey's. Those at the beginning of the second book were Coleridge's. The simile of the Laplander may be read in *The Destiny of Nations* (lines 63-79). These were the reasons given by Coleridge for monarchs making war:

When Luxury and Lust's exhausted stores
No more can rouse the appetites of KINGS;
When the low Flattery of their reptile Lords
Falls flat and heavy on the accustomed ear;
When Eunuchs sing, and Fools buffoon'ry make,
And Dancers writhe their harlot limbs in vain:
Then War and all its dread vicissitudes
Pleasingly agitate their stagnant hearts. . . .

The four hundred and forty-seventh line was Coleridge's. This is the passage:

Whether thy LAW with unrefracted Ray
Beam on the PROPHET's purged Eye, or if
Diseasing Realms the ENTHUSIAST, wild of thought,
Scatter new frenzies on the infected Throng,
THOU, Both inspiring and foredooming, Both
Fit INSTRUMENTS and best of perfect END.

With page 98 we come to Southey again, the remaining references being to him. The maid baffles the doctors in Book III; page 126 is in Book IV; the personifications are in Book VI; the converse between Joan and Conrade is in Book IV; page 313 is at the beginning of Book IX; and pages 315, 347, and 361 are also in Book IX. Southey in the preface to *Joan of Arc*, speaking of Homer, says: 'Pope has disguised him in fop-finery and Cowper has stripped him naked.' 'Crazy Kate' is an episode in *The Task* ('The Sofa').

The *Monody on John Henderson*, by Joseph Cottle, was printed anonymously in a volume of poems in 1795, and again in *The Malvern Hills*. John Henderson (1757-88) was an eccentric scholar of Bristol. The lines praised by Lamb are the fourth, twelfth, and sixty-fourth. The poem must not be confused with the *Monody on Henderson*, the actor, by G. D. Harley.

Lamb now turns again to Coleridge's *Poems*. The poem on the thirteenth and fourteenth pages of this little volume was 'To the Rev. W. J. H.' The

twenty-first Effusion was that entitled *Composed while Climbing the Left Ascent of Brockley Coomb*. The thirty-fifth Effusion is known as *The Eolian Harp*. The letter from Shurton Bars is the poem beginning:

Nor travels my meand'ring eye.

The fourth Epistle is that to Joseph Cottle, Coleridge's publisher and the author of the *Monody on Henderson*, referred to in Coleridge's verses. The lines which Lamb quotes are Cottle's. The poem by Sara Coleridge is *The Silver Thimble*. The passage in the *Religious Musings*, for which Lamb is thankful as a 'child of fancy,' is the last paragraph:

Contemplant Spirits! ye that hover o'er
With untired gaze the immeasurable fount
Ebullient with creative Deity!
And ye of plastic power, that interfused
Roll through the grosser and material mass
In organizing surge! Holies of God!
(And what if Monads of the infinite mind?)
I haply journeying my immortal course
Shall sometime join your mystic choir!
Till then
I discipline my young noviciate thought
In ministries of heart-stirring song,
And aye on Meditation's heaven-ward wing
Soaring aloft I breathe the empyreal air
Of Love, omnific, omnipresent Love,
Whose day-spring rises glorious in my soul
As the great Sun, when he his influence
Sheds on the frost-bound waters—The glad stream
Flows to the ray and warbles as it flows.

'You came to Town . . . ' Soon after his engagement with Sara Fricker, his heart being still not wholly healed of its passion for Mary Evans, Coleridge had gone to London from Bristol, nominally to arrange for the publication of his *Fall of Robespierre*, and had resumed intercourse with Lamb and other old Christ's Hospital friends. There he remained until Southey forcibly took him back. From what Lamb says of the loss of two friends we must suppose, in default of other information, that he had to give up his Anna at the same time. The loss of reason, however, to which he refers did not come until the end of the year 1795.

The nineteenth Effusion, afterwards called *On a Discovery Made Too Late*; the twenty-eighth, *The Kiss*; the twenty-ninth, *Imitated from Ossian*.

'Your monody.' This, not to be confounded with Cottle's *Monody on Henderson*, was Coleridge's *Monody on Chatterton*. Lamb's emendations were not accepted. As regards *The Man of Ross*, the couplet beginning 'Friend to the friendless' ultimately had a place both in that poem and in the *Monody*, but the couplet 'and o'er the dowried virgin' was never replaced in either. The

lines on spring, page 28, are 'Lines to a Beautiful Spring.' Dr. Forster (Faustus) was the hero of the nursery rhyme, whose scholars danced out of England into France, and Spain, and back again. The Epitaph on an Infant was in the *Watchman*, No. IX (see note on page 62). The poem *Edmund* is called 'Lines on a Friend who died of a frenzy fever induced by calumnious reports.' The lines in *Absence* are those in the second stanza of the poem. They run thus:

Ah fair Delights! that o'er my soul
On Memory's wing, like shadows fly!
Ah Flowers! which Joy from Eden stole
While Innocence stood smiling by!—
But cease, fond Heart! this bootless moan:
Those Hours on rapid Pinions flown
Shall yet return, by ABSENCE crowned,
And scatter livelier roses round.

The nineteenth Effusion, beginning 'Thou bleedest, my poor heart,' is known as *On a Discovery Made Too Late*. The twentieth Effusion is the sonnet to Schiller. The lines which were sent to Lamb, written in December 1794, are called *To a Friend, together with an unfinished poem (Religious Musings)*. Coleridge's *Restless Gale* is the imitation of Ossian, beginning, 'The stream with languid murmur creeps.' 'Foodful' occurs thus in the lines *To an Infant*:

Alike the foodful fruit and scorching fire
Awake thy eager grasp and young desire.

Coleridge did not alter the phrase.

Lamb contributed four effusions to this volume of Coleridge's: the seventh, to Mrs. Siddons (written in conjunction with Coleridge), the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth. All were signed C. L. Coleridge had permitted himself to make various alterations. The following parallel will show the kind of treatment to which Lamb objected:

| LAMB'S ORIGINAL EFFUSION (11) | AS ALTERED BY COLERIDGE |
|---|---|
| Was it some sweet device of Faery | Was it some sweet device of faery |
| That mock'd my steps with many a lonely glade, | land That mock'd my steps with many a lonely glade, |
| And fancied wanderings with a fair- hair'd maid? | And fancied wand'rings with a fair- hair'd maid? |
| Have these things been? or what rare witchery, | Have these things been? Or did the wizard wand |
| Impregning with delights the charmed air, | Of Merlin wave, impregning vacant air, |
| Enlighted up the semblance of a smile | And kindle up the vision of a smile |
| In those fine eyes? methought they spake the while | In those blue eyes, that seem'd to speak the while |

| | |
|---|---|
| Soft soothing things, which might enforce despair | Such tender things, as might enforce Despair |
| To drop the murdering knife, and let go by | To drop the murth'ring knife, and let go by |
| His foul resolve. And does the lonely glade | His fell resolve? Ah me! the lonely glade |
| Still court the foot-steps of the fair- hair'd maid? | Still courts the footsteps of the fair- hair'd maid, |
| Still in her locks the gales of summer sigh? | Among whose locks the west-winds love to sigh: |
| While I forlorn do wander reckless where, | But I forlorn do wander, reckless where, |
| And 'mid my wanderings meet no Anna there. | And mid my wand'rings find no ANNA there! |

In Effusion 12 Lamb had written:

Or we might sit and tell some tender tale
Of faithful vows repaid by cruel scorn,
A tale of true love, or of friend forgot;
And I would teach thee, lady, how to rail
In gentle sort, on those who practise not
Or Love or pity, though of woman born.

Coleridge made it:

But ah! sweet scenes of fancied bliss, adieu!
On rose-leaf beds amid your faery bowers
I all too long have lost the dreamy hours!
Beseems it now the sterner Muse to woo,
If haply she her golden meed impart
To realize the vision of the heart.

Again in the thirteenth Effusion, *Written at Midnight, by the Seaside, after a Voyage*, Lamb had dotted out the last two lines. Coleridge substituted the couplet:

How Reason reel'd! What gloomy transports rose!
Till the rude dashing rock'd them to repose.

Effusion 2, which Lamb would omit, was the sonnet *To Burke*; Effusion 3, *To Mercy* (on Pitt); Effusion 5, *To Erskine*; Effusion 7, Lamb and Coleridge's joint sonnet, *To Mrs. Siddons*; and Effusion 8, *To Kosciusko*. The *Lines Written in Early Youth* were afterwards called *Lines on an Autumnal Evening*. The poem called *Recollection* in the *Watchman* was reborn as *Sonnet to the River Otter*. The lines on the early blossom were praised by Lamb in a previous letter. The tenth Effusion was the sonnet to Earl Stanhope.

Godwin. William Godwin, whom Lamb is now treating rather contemptuously, but afterwards came to know and moderately to like, was forty years of age, and well known for his *Political Justice*, published in 1793, and for his

free-thinking views, acquired after, or during, a period as a minister of the gospel. It was probably through Godwin that Lamb came to know several of his friends, notably Thomas Holcroft, the dramatist. It was in 1797 that Godwin married Mary Wollstonecraft, who died in giving birth, in the same year, to their daughter Mary, afterwards Shelley's wife, and a friend of Lamb's later years.

It was Allen's wife, not Stoddart's, who had a grown-up daughter.

Ned Evans was a novel in four volumes, published in 1796, an imitation of *Tom Jones*, which presumably Coleridge was reviewing for the *Critical Review*, although there is no mention of it in *A Wiltshire Parson and his Friends*, the parson being W. L. Bowles, by Garland Greever, 1926.

Young W. Evans is said by the late Dykes Campbell, the first authority of his time on Coleridge, to have been the only son of the Mrs. Evans who befriended Coleridge when he was at Christ's Hospital, the mother of his first love, Mary Evans. Evans was at school with Coleridge and Lamb. We shall meet with him again.

William Lisle Bowles (1762-1850), the sonneteer, who had exerted so powerful a poetical influence on Coleridge's mind, was at this time rector of Cricklade in Wiltshire (1792-97), but had been ill at Bath. The elegy in question was *Elegiac Stanzas written during sickness at Bath, December 1795*. The lines quoted by Lamb are respectively in the sixth, fourth, fifth, and nineteenth stanzas.

Sophia Pringle. I have not found the verses.

Izaak Walton. We shall find Lamb again praising *The Compleat Angler* in a letter to Robert Lloyd.

The reference to the Unitarian chapel bears probably upon an offer of a pulpit to Coleridge. The tutorship was probably that offered to Coleridge by Mrs. Evans of Darley Hall (no relation to Mary Evans), who wished him to teach her sons. Neither project was carried through.]

4. TO S. T. COLERIDGE

(Apparently a continuation of a letter the first part of which is missing)

[Begun] *Monday Night* [13th June 1796].

Unfurnished at present with any sheet-filling subject, I shall continue my letter gradually and journal-wise. My second thoughts entirely coincide with your comments on 'Joan of Arc,' and I can only wonder at my childish judgment which overlooked the 1st book and could prefer the 9th: not that I was insensible to the soberer beauties of the former, but the latter caught me with its glare of magic,—the former, however, left a more pleasing general recollection in my mind. Let me add, the

1st book was the favourite of my sister—and *I* now, with Joan, often ‘think on Domremi and the fields of Arc.’ I must not pass over without acknowledging my obligations to your full and satisfactory account of personifications. I have read it again and again, and it will be a guide to my future taste. Perhaps I had estimated Southey’s merits too much by number, weight, and measure. I now agree completely and entirely in your opinion of the genius of Southey. Your own image of melancholy is illustrative of what you teach, and in itself masterly. I conjecture it is ‘disbranched’ from one of your embryo ‘hymns.’ When they are mature of birth (were I you) I should print ‘em in one separate volume, with ‘Religious Musings’ and your part of the ‘Joan of Arc.’ Birds of the same soaring wing should hold on their flight in company. Once for all (and by renewing the subject you will only renew in me the condemnation of Tantalus), I hope to be able to pay you a visit (if you are then at Bristol) some time in the latter end of August or beginning of September for a week or fortnight; before that time, office business puts an absolute veto on my coming.

‘And if a sigh that speaks regret of happier times appear,
A glimpse of joy that we have met shall shine and dry the tear.’

Of the blank verses I spoke of, the following lines are the only tolerably complete ones I have writ out of not more than one hundred and fifty. That I get on so slowly you may fairly impute to want of practice in composition, when I declare to you that (the few verses which you have seen excepted) I have not writ fifty lines since I left school. It may not be amiss to remark that my grandmother (on whom the verses are written) lived house-keeper in a family the fifty or sixty last years of her life—that she was a woman of exemplary piety and goodness—and for many years before her death was terribly afflicted with a cancer in her breast which she bore with true Christian patience. You may think that I have not kept enough apart the ideas of her heavenly and her earthly master but recollect I have designedly given in to her own way of feeling—and if she had a failing, ’twas that she respected her master’s family too much, not revered her Maker too little. The lines begin imperfectly, as I may probably connect ’em if I finish at all,—and if I do, Biggs shall print ’em

in a more economical way than you yours, for (Sonnets and all) they won't make a thousand lines as I propose completing 'em, and the substance must be wire-drawn.

Tuesday Evening, June 14, 1796.

I am not quite satisfied now with the Chatterton, and with your leave will try my hand at it again. A master joiner, you know, may leave a cabinet to be finished by his journeyman when his own hands are full. To your list of illustrative personifications, into which a fine imagination enters, I will take leave to add the following from Beaumont and Fletcher's 'Wife for a Month;' 'tis the conclusion of a description of a sea-fight;—'The game of *death* was never played so nobly; the meagre thief grew wanton in his mischiefs, and his shrunk hollow eyes smiled on his ruins.' There is fancy in these of a lower order from 'Bonduca;'—'Then did I see these valiant men of Britain, like boding owls creep into tods of ivy, and hoot their fears to one another nightly.' Not that it is a personification; only it just caught my eye in a little extract book I keep, which is full of quotations from B. and F. in particular, in which authors I can't help thinking there is a greater richness of poetical fancy than in any one, Shakspeare excepted. Are you acquainted with Massinger? At a hazard I will trouble you with a passage from a play of his called 'A Very Woman.' The lines are spoken by a lover (disguised) to his faithless mistress. You will remark the fine effect of the double endings. You will by your ear distinguish the lines, for I write 'em as prose. 'Not far from where my father lives, *a lady*, a neighbour by, blest with as great a *beauty* as nature durst bestow without *undoing*, dwelt, and most happily, as I thought then, and blest the house a thousand times she *dwelt in*. This beauty, in the blossom of my youth, when my first fire knew no adulterate *incense*, nor I no way to flatter but my *fondness*; in all the bravery my friends could *show me*, in all the faith my innocence could *give me*, in the best language my true tongue could *tell me*, and all the broken sighs my sick heart *lend me*, I sued and served; long did I serve this *lady*, long was my travail, long my trade to *win her*; with all the duty of my soul I SERVED HER.' 'Then she must love.' 'She did, but never me: she could not *love me*; she would not love, she hated,—more, she

scorn'd me; and in so poor and base a way *abused me* for all my services, for all my *bounties*, so bold neglects flung on me'— 'What out of love, and worthy love, I *gave her* (shame to her most unworthy mind,) to fools, to girls, to fiddlers and her boys she flung, all in disdain of me.' One more passage strikes my eye from B. and F.'s 'Palamon and Arcite.' One of 'em complains in prison: 'This is all our world; we shall know nothing here but one another, hear nothing but the clock that tells our woes; the vine shall grow, but we shall never see it,' &c. Is not the last circumstance exquisite? I mean not to lay myself open by saying they exceed Milton, and perhaps Collins, in sublimity. But don't you conceive all poets after Shakspeare yield to 'em in variety of genius? Massinger treads close on their heels; but you are most probably as well acquainted with his writings as your humble servant. My quotations, in that case, will only serve to expose my barrenness of matter. Southey in simplicity and tenderness, is excelled decidedly only, I think, by Beaumont and F. in his [their] 'Maid's Tragedy' and some parts of 'Philaster' in particular, and elsewhere occasionally; and perhaps by Cowper in his 'Crazy Kate,' and in parts of his translation, such as the speeches of Hecuba and Andromache. I long to know your opinion of that translation. The Odyssey especially is surely very Homeric. What nobler than the appearance of Phœbus at the beginning of the Iliad—the lines ending with 'Dread sounding, bounding on the silver bow!'

I beg you will give me your opinion of the translation; it afforded me high pleasure. As curious a specimen of translation as ever fell into my hands, is a young man's in our office, of a French novel. What in the original was literally 'amiable delusions of the fancy,' he proposed to render 'the fair frauds of the imagination!' I had much trouble in licking the book into any meaning at all. Yet did the knave clear fifty or sixty pounds by subscription and selling the copyright. The book itself not a week's work! To-day's portion of my journalising epistle has been very dull and poverty-stricken. I will here end.

Tuesday Night.

I have been drinking egg-hot and smoking Oronooko (associated circumstances, which ever forcibly recall to my mind our

evenings and nights at the Salutation); my eyes and brain are heavy and asleep, but my heart is awake; and if words came as ready as ideas, and ideas as feelings, I could say ten hundred kind things. Coleridge, you know not my supreme happiness at having one on earth (though counties separate us) whom I can call a friend. Remember you those tender lines of Logan?

'Our broken friendships we deplore,
And loves of youth that are no more;
No after friendships e'er can raise
Th'endearments of our early days,
And ne'er the heart such fondness prove,
As when we first began to love.'

I am writing at random, and half-tipsy, what you may not *equally* understand, as you will be sober when you read it; but my sober and my half-tipsy hours you are alike a sharer in. Good night.

'Then up rose our bard, like a prophet in drink,
Craigdoroch, thou 'lt soar when creation shall sink.'

BURNS.

Thursday [16th June 1796].

I am now in high hopes to be able to visit you, if perfectly convenient on your part, by the end of next month—perhaps the last week or fortnight in July. A change of scene and a change of faces would do me good, even if that scene were not to be Bristol, and those faces Coleridge's and his friends. In the words of Terence, a little altered, 'Tædet me hujus quotidiani mundi.' I am heartily sick of the every-day scenes of life. I shall half wish you unmarried (don't show this to Mrs. C.) for one evening only, to have the pleasure of smoking with you, and drinking egg-hot in some little smoky room in a pot-house, for I know not yet how I shall like you in a decent room, and looking quite happy. My best love and respects to Sara notwithstanding.

Yours sincerely,

CHARLES LAMB.

[Coleridge's image of melancholy will be found in the lines *Melancholy—a fragment*. It was published in *Sibylline Leaves*, 1817, and in a note Coleridge said that the verses were printed in the *Morning Chronicle* in 1794. They were really printed in the *Morning Post*, 12th December 1797. Coleridge had probably sent them to Lamb in MS. The 'hymns' came to nothing.

'The following lines.' Lamb's poem *The Grandame* was presumably included in this letter. Mary Field, Lamb's grandmother, died 31st July 1792, aged seventy-nine, and was buried in Widford churchyard. She had been for many years housekeeper in the Plumer family at Blakesware. On William Plumer's moving to Gilston, a neighbouring seat, in 1767, she had sole charge of the Blakesware mansion, where her grandchildren used to visit her. Compare Lamb's *Elia* essays 'Blakesmoor in H——shire' and 'Dream-Children.'

N. Biggs was the printer of Coleridge's *Poems*, 1797.

Lamb had begun his amendment of Coleridge's *Monody on the Death of Chatterton* in his letter of 10th June. Coleridge's illustrative personifications, here referred to, are in that poem. The extract book from which Lamb copied his quotations from Beaumont and Fletcher and Massinger was, he afterwards tells us, destroyed; but similar volumes, which he filled later, are preserved. I saw one, in the Huntington Library, containing the following excerpts: *O saw ye Bonnie Lesley* (Burns), *When nimble time that all things overruns* (Wither), *She* (i.e. Poesy) *doth tell me where to borrow* (Wither), *Edom o' Gordon, Edward, Edward, Sir Patrick Spence, The Aged Lover renounceth Love* (Le Vaux), *Take thy old Cloak about thee, The bonny Earl of Murray, The Spanish Lady's Love, Waly, Waly, Love be bonny, The old and young Courtier, Fair Margaret and Sweet William, The Jew's Daughter, Sir Carline, Sir John Grehme and Barbara Allen, Lady Ann Botwell's Lament, Adam Bell, Clym of the Clough and William of Cloudeley, John Anderson my Jo* (Burns), *A Song from Schiller*, paraphrased by Lamb for Coleridge: *The Clouds are Blackening*, and *A Concept of Diabolical Possession* (Burton).

Writing to Charles Lloyd, sen., in 1809, Lamb says of Cowper as a translator of Homer, that he 'delays you . . . walking over a Bowling Green.'

Canon Ainger possessed a copy of the book translated by Lamb's fellow-clerk. It was called *Sentimental Tablets of the Good Pamphile*. 'Translated from the French of M. Gorjy by P. S. Dupuy of the East India House, 1795.' Among the subscribers' names were such other India House clerks as Thomas Bye (5 copies), Ball, Evans, Savory (2 copies), and Lamb himself.]

5. TO S. T. COLERIDGE

[Probably begun on Wednesday, 29th June.
P.M. 1st July 1796.]

The first moment I can come I will, but my hopes of coming yet a while yet hang on a ticklish thread. The coach I come by is immaterial as I shall so easily by your direction find ye out. My mother is grown so entirely helpless (not having any use of her limbs) that Mary is necessarily confined from ever sleeping out, she being her bed fellow. 'She thanks you tho' and will accompany me in spirit. Most exquisite are the lines from Withers. Your own lines introductory to your poem on Self

run smoothly and pleasurably, and I exhort you to continue 'em. What shall I say to your Dactyls? They are what you would call good per se, but a parody on some of 'em is just now suggesting itself, and you shall have it rough and unlicked. I mark with figures the lines parodied.

4. Sórely your Dáctyls do drág along límp-footed.
5. Sád is the méasure that hañgs a clod róund 'em so,
6. Méagre, and lañguid, procláiming its wrétchedness.
1. Wéary, unsátisfied, nótt little síck of 'em,
11. Córd is my tíred heart, I have no chárity.
2. Páinfully trávv'ling thus óver the rúgged road.
7. Ó begone, Méasure, half Látin, half Eñglish, then.
12. Dísmal your Dáctyls are, Gód help ye, rhyming Ones.

I *possibly* may not come this fortnight—therefore all thou hast to do is not to look for me any particular day, only to write word immediately if at any time you quit Bristol, lest I come and Taffy be not at home. I *hope* I can come in a day or two. But young Savory of my office is suddenly taken ill in this very nick of time and I must officiate for him till he can come to work again. Had the knave gone sick and died and putrefied at any other time, philosophy might have afforded one comfort, but just now I have no patience with him. Quarles I am as great a stranger to as I was to Withers. I wish you would try and do something to bring our elder bards into more general fame. I writhe with indignation when in books of Criticism, where common place quotation is heaped upon quotation, I find no mention of such men as Massinger, or B. and Fl, men with whom succeeding Dramatic Writers (Otway alone excepted) can bear no manner of comparison. Stupid Knox hath noticed none of 'em among his extracts.

Thursday.—Mrs. C. can scarce guess how she has gratified me by her very kind letter and sweet little poem. I feel that I *should* thank her in rhyme, but she must take my acknowledgment at present in plain honest prose. The uncertainty in which I yet stand whether I can come or no damps my spirits, reduces me a degree below prosaical, and keeps me in a suspense that fluctuates between hope and fear. Hope is a charming, lively, blue-eyed wench, and I am always glad of her company, but could

dispense with the visitor she brings with her, her younger sister, Fear, a white-liver'd, lilly-cheeked, bashful, palpitating, awkward hussey, that hangs like a green girl at her sister's apronstrings, and will go with her whithersoever *she* goes. For the life and soul of me I could not improve those lines in your poem on the Prince and Princess, so I changed them to what you bid me and left 'em at Perry's. I think 'em altogether good, and do not see why you were solicitous about *any* alteration. I have not yet seen, but will make it my business to see, to-day's *Chronicle*, for your verses on Horne Took. Dyer stanza'd him in one of the papers t'other day, but I think unsuccessfully. Tooke's friends' meeting was I suppose a dinner of CONDOLENCE. I am not sorry to find you (for all Sara) immersed in clouds of smoke and metaphysic. You know I had a sneaking kindness for this last noble science, and you taught me some smattering of it. I look to become no mean proficient under your tuition. Coleridge, what do you mean by saying you wrote to me about Plutarch and Porphyry—I received no such letter, nor remember a syllable of the matter, yet am not apt to forget any part of your epistles, least of all an injunction like that. I will cast about for 'em, tho' I am a sad hand to know what books are worth, and both those worthy gentlemen are alike out of my line. To-morrow I shall be less suspensive and in better cue to write, so good bye at present.

Friday Evening.—That execrable aristocrat and knave Richardson has given me an absolute refusal of leave! The *poor man* cannot guess at my disappointment. Is it not hard, 'this dread dependence on the low bred mind?' Continue to write to me tho', and I must be content— Our loves and best good wishes attend upon you both.

LAMB.

Savory did return, but there are 2 or 3 more ill and absent, which was the plea for refusing me. I will never commit my peace of mind by depending on such a wretch for a favor in future, so shall never have heart to ask for holidays again. The man next him in office, Cartwright, furnished him with the objections.

C. LAMB.

[The Dactyls were Coleridge's only in the third stanza; the remainder were Southey's. The poem is known as *The Soldier's Wife*, printed in Southey's

Poems, 1797. Later Southey revised the verses. The *Anti-Jacobin* had a parody of them.

Young Savory was probably a relative of Hester Savory, whom we shall meet later. He entered the East India House on the same day that Lamb did.

We do not know what were the lines from Wither which Coleridge had sent to Lamb, but possibly one of the passages copied by Lamb in the Huntington Library Commonplace Book. Lamb himself eventually did much to bring Wither and the elder bards into more general fame—in the *Dramatic Specimens*, 1808, and in the essay 'On the Poetical Works of George Wither,' in the *Works*, 1818.

Stupid Knox was Vicesimus Knox (1752–1821), the editor of *Elegant Extracts* in many forms.

'Her . . . sweet little poem.' Sara Coleridge's verses no longer exist. See Lamb's next letter for his poetical reply.

Coleridge's poem on the Prince and Princess, *On a Late Connubial Rupture in High Life*, was not accepted by Perry, of the *Morning Chronicle*. It appeared in the *Monthly Magazine*, September 1796. The *Verses addressed to J. Horne Tooke and the company who met on June 28th 1796, to celebrate his poll at the Westminster Election*, were not printed in the *Morning Chronicle*. Tooke had opposed Charles James Fox, who polled 5,160 votes, and Sir Alan Gardner, who polled 4,814, against his own 2,819.

Dyer was George Dyer (1755–1841), an old Christ's Hospitalter (but before Lamb and Coleridge's time), of whom we shall see much—Lamb's famous 'G. D.'

William Richardson was Accountant-General of the East India House at that time; Charles Cartwright, his Deputy.]

6. TO S. T. COLERIDGE

The 5th July, 1796.

TO SARA AND HER SAMUEL

Was it so hard a thing? I did but ask
A fleeting holy day. One little week,
Or haply two, had bounded my request.

What if the jaded Steer, who all day long
Had borne the heat and labour of the plough,
When Evening came and her sweet cooling hour,
Should seek to trespass on a neighbour copse,
Where greener herbage waved, or clearer streams
Invited him to slake his burning thirst?
That Man were crabbed, who should say him Nay:
That Man were churlish, who should drive him thence!

A blessing light upon your heads, ye good,
 Ye hospitable pair. I may not come,
 To catch on Clifden's heights the summer gale:
 I may not come, a pilgrim, to the 'Vales
 Where Avon winds,' to taste th' inspiring waves
 Which Shakespere drank, our British Helicon:
 Or, with mine eye intent on Redcliffe towers,
 To drop a tear for that Mysterious youth,
 Cruelly slighted, who to London Walls,
 In evil hour, shap'd his disastrous course.

Complaints, begone; begone, ill-omen'd thoughts—
 For yet again, and lo! from Avon banks
 Another 'Minstrel' cometh! Youth beloved,
 God and good angels guide thee on thy way,
 And gentler fortunes wait the friends I love.

C. L.

7. TO S. T. COLERIDGE

the 6th July [P.M. 7th July, 1796].

Substitute in room of that last confused & incorrect Paragraph,
 following the words 'disastrous course,' these lines

| | | | |
|---------------|----|---|---|
| Vide | | { | With better hopes, I trust, from Avon's vales |
| 3d page of | no | | This other 'minstrel' cometh. Youth endear'd, |
| this epistle. | | | God & good Angels guide thee on thy road, |
| | | | And gentler fortunes wait the friends I love. |

[Lamb has crossed through the above lines.]

Let us prose.

What can I do till you send word what priced and placed house you should like? Islington (possibly) you would not like, to me 'tis classical ground. Knightsbridge is a desirable situation for the air of the parks. St. George's Fields is convenient for its contiguity to the Bench. Chuse! But are you really coming to town? The hope of it has entirely disarmed my petty disappointment of its nettles. Yet I rejoice so much on my own account, that I fear I do not feel enough pure satisfaction on yours. Why, surely, the joint editorship of the Chron: must be a very comfortable & secure living for a man. But should not you read

French, or do you? & can you write with sufficient moderation, as 'tis call'd, when one suppresses the one half of what one feels, or could say, on a subject, to chime in the better with popular lukewarmness?—White's 'Letters' are near publication. Could you review 'em, or get 'em reviewed? Are you not connected with the Crit: Rev:? His frontispiece is a good conceit: Sir John learning to dance, to please Madame Page, in dress of doublet, etc., from [for] the upper half; & modern pantaloons, with shoes, etc., of the 18th century, from [for] the lower half —& the whole work is full of goodly quips & rare fancies, 'all deftly masqued like hoar antiquity'—much superior to Dr. Kenrick's Falstaff's Wedding, which you may have seen. Allen sometimes laughs at Superstition, & Religion, & the like. A living fell vacant lately in the gift of the Hospital. White informed him that he stood a fair chance for it. He scrupled & scrupled about it, and at last (to use his own words) 'tampered' with *Godwin* to know whether the thing was honest or not. *Godwin* said nay to it, & Allen rejected the living! Could the blindest Poor Papish have bowed more servilely to his Priest or Casuist? Why sleep the Watchman's answers to that *Godwin*? I beg you will not delay to alter, if you mean to keep, those last lines I sent you. Do that, & read these for your pains:—

TO THE POET COWPER

Cowper, I thank my God that thou art heal'd!
 Thine was the sorest malady of all;
 And I am sad to think that it should light
 Upon the worthy head! But thou art heal'd,
 And thou art yet, we trust, the destin'd man,
 Born to reanimate the Lyre, whose chords
 Have slumber'd, and have idle lain so long,
 To the immortal sounding of whose strings
 Did Milton frame the stately-pacèd verse;
 Among whose wires with lighter finger playing,
 Our elder bard, Spenser, a gentle name,
 The Lady Muses' dearest darling child,
 Elicited the deffest tunes yet heard
 In Hall or Bower, taking the delicate Ear
 Of Sydney, & his peerless Maiden Queen.

Thou, then, take up the mighty Epic strain,
 Cowper, of England's Bards, the wisest & the best.

I have read your climax of praises in those 3 reviews. These mighty spouters-out of panegyric waters have, 2 of 'em, scattered their spray even upon me! & the waters are cooling & refreshing. Prosaically, the Monthly Reviewers have made indeed a large article of it, & done you justice. The Critical have, in their wisdom, selected not the very best specimens, & notice not, except as one name on the muster-roll, the 'Religious Musings.' I suspect Master Dyer to have been the writer of that article, as the substance of it was the very remarks & the very language he used to me one day. I fear you will not accord entirely with my sentiments of Cowper, as *expressed* above, (perhaps scarcely just), but the poor Gentleman has just recovered from his Lunacies, & that begets pity, & pity love, and love admiration, & then it goes hard with People but they lie! Have you read the Ballad called 'Leonora,' in the second Number of the 'Monthly Magazine'? If you have!!!!!!!!!!!!!! There is another fine song, from the same author (Berger), in the 3d No., of scarce inferior merit; & (vastly below these) there are some happy specimens of English hexameters, in an imitation of Ossian, in the 5th No. For your Dactyls I am sorry you are so sore about 'em—a very Sir Fretful! In good troth, the Dactyls are good Dactyls, but their measure is naught. Be not yourself 'half anger, half agony' if I pronounce your darling lines not to be the best you ever wrote—you have written much.

For the alterations in those lines, let 'em run thus:

I may not come a pilgrim, to the Banks
of *Avon, lucid stream*, to taste the wave
which Shakspeare drank, our British Helicon;
or with mine eye, &c., &c.

(inspiring wave) was too
common place.

To muse, in tears, on that mysterious Youth, &c.

(better than 'drop a
tear')

Then the last paragraph alter thus

Complaint begone, begone unkind reproof,
Take up, my song, take up a merrier strain,
For yet again, & lo! from Avon's vales,
Another minstrel cometh! youth *endeared*,
God & good angels &c., as before.

better refer to my own
'complaint' solely than half
to that and half to Chatterton
as in your copy, which
creates a confusion—'ominous
fears' &c.

Have a care, good Master poet, of the Statute de Contumelia.

What do you mean by calling Madame Mara harlot & naughty things? The goodness of the verse would not save you in a court of Justice. But are you really coming to town?

Coleridge, a gentleman called in London lately from Bristol, & inquired whether there were any of the family of a Mr. Chambers living—this Mr. Chambers he said had been the making of a friend's fortune who wished to make some return for it. He went away without seeing her. Now, a Mrs. Reynolds, a very intimate friend of ours, whom you have seen at our house, is the only daughter, & all that survives, of Mr. Chambers—& a very little supply would be of service to her, for she married very unfortunately, & has parted with her husband. Pray find out this Mr. Pember (for that was the gentleman's friend's name), he is an attorney, & lives at Bristol. Find him out, & acquaint him with the circumstances of the case, & offer to be the medium of supply to Mrs. Reynolds, if he chuses to make her a present. She is in very distress circumstances. Mr. Pember, attorney, Bristol—Mr. Chambers lived in the Temple. Mrs. Reynolds, his daughter, was my schoolmistress, & is in the room at this present writing. This last circumstance induced me to write so soon again—I have not further to add—Our loves to Sara.

Thursday.

C. LAMB.

[The passage at the beginning, before 'Let us prose,' together with the later passages in the same manner, refers to the poem in the preceding letter which in slightly different form is printed in editions of Lamb as *Lines to Sara and Her Samuel*. To complete the sense of the letter one should compare the text of the poem in Lamb's *Works*.

Coleridge had just received a suggestion, through Dr. Beddoes of Bristol, that he should replace Grey, the late co-editor (with James Perry) of the *Morning Chronicle*. It came to nothing; but Coleridge had told Lamb and had asked him to look out a house in town for him.

'All deftly masqued.' From Coleridge's *Monody on the Death of Chatterton*.

Dr. Kenrick's *Falstaff's Wedding*, 1760, was a continuation of Shakespeare's *Henry IV*.

The lines to Cowper were printed in the *Monthly Magazine* for December 1796.

Coleridge's *Poems* were reviewed in the *Monthly Review*, June 1796, with a reference to Lamb as 'a friend,' and calling his contribution 'of no inferior merit.' The *Critical Review* for the same month said of Lamb's effusions: 'These are very beautiful.'

Bürger's *Leonora*, which was to have such an influence upon English literature (it was the foundation of much of Sir Walter Scott's poetry), was translated from the German by William Taylor of Norwich in 1790, and printed in the *Monthly Magazine* in March 1796. Scott at once made a rival version. The other fine song, in the April *Monthly Magazine*, was *The Lass of Fair Wone*.

The mention of the Statute de Contumelia seems to refer to the *Lines Composed in a Concert-Room*, which were first printed in the *Morning Post*, September 24, 1799, but must have been written earlier. Madame Mara (1749-1833) is not mentioned by name in the poem, but being one of the principal singers of the day Lamb probably fastened the epithet upon her by way of pleasantry; or she may have been referred to in the version of the lines which Lamb had seen.

The passage about Mr. Chambers is not now explicable; but we know that Mrs. Reynolds had been Lamb's schoolmistress, probably when he was very small, and before he went to William Bird's Academy, and that in later life he allowed her a pension of £30 a year until her death in 1832.

This letter contains the first reference to George Dyer (1755-1841), Lamb's eccentric scholar friend and butt, whom we are often to meet.

Between this and the next letter came, in all probability, a number of letters to Coleridge which have been lost. It is incredible that Lamb kept silence, at this period, for eleven weeks.]

8. TO S. T. COLERIDGE

[P.M. 27th September 1796.]

My dearest friend—White or some of my friends or the public papers by this time may have informed you of the terrible calamities that have fallen on our family. I will only give you the outlines. My poor dear dearest sister in a fit of insanity has been the death of her own mother. I was at hand only time enough to snatch the knife out of her grasp. She is at present in a mad house, from whence I fear she must be moved to an hospital. God has preserved to me my senses,—I eat and drink and sleep, and have my judgment I believe very sound. My poor father was slightly wounded, and I am left to take care of him and my aunt. Mr. Norris of the Bluecoat school has been very kind to us, and we have no other friend, but thank God I am very calm and composed, and able to do the best that remains to do. Write,—as religious a letter as possible—but no mention of what is gone and done with—with me the former things are

passed away, and I have something more to do that [than] to feel ——

God almighty

have us all in
his keeping.—

C. LAMB.

mention nothing of poetry. I have destroyed every vestige of past vanities of that kind. Do as you please, but if you publish, publish mine (I give free leave) without name or initial, and never send me a book, I charge you, you [your] own judgment will convince you not to take any notice of this yet to your dear wife.—You look after your family,—I have my reason and strength left to take care of mine. I charge you don't think of coming to see me. Write. I will not see you if you come. God almighty love you and all of us——

[The following is the report of the inquest upon Mrs. Lamb which appeared in the *Morning Chronicle* for 26th September 1796. The tragedy had occurred on Thursday, 22nd September:

On Friday afternoon the Coroner and a respectable Jury sat on the body of a Lady in the neighbourhood of Holborn, who died in consequence of a wound from her daughter the preceding day. It appeared by the evidence adduced, that while the family were preparing for dinner, the young lady seized a case knife laying on the table, and in a menacing manner pursued a little girl, her apprentice, round the room; on the eager calls of her helpless infirm mother to forbear, she renounced her first object, and with loud shrieks approached her parent.

The child by her cries quickly brought up the landlord of the house, but too late—the dreadful scene presented to him the mother lifeless, pierced to the heart, on a chair, her daughter yet wildly standing over her with the fatal knife, and the venerable old man, her father, weeping by her side, himself bleeding at the forehead from the effects of a severe blow he received from one of the forks she had been madly hurling about the room.

For a few days prior to this the family had observed some symptoms of insanity in her, which had so much increased on the Wednesday evening, that her brother early the next morning went in quest of Dr. Pitcairn—had that gentleman been met with, the fatal catastrophe had, in all probability, been prevented.

It seems the young Lady had been once before, in her earlier years, deranged, from the harassing fatigues of too much business.—As her carriage towards her mother was ever affectionate in the extreme, it is believed that to the increased attentiveness, which her parents' infirmities called for by day and night, is to be attributed the present insanity of this ill-fated young woman.

It has been stated in some of the Morning Papers, that she has an insane brother also in confinement—this is without foundation.

The Jury of course brought in their Verdict, *Lunacy*.

In the *Whitehall Evening Post* the first part of the account is the same, but the end is as follows:

The above unfortunate young person is a Miss Lamb, a mantua-maker, in Little Queen-street, Lincoln's-inn-fields. She has been, since, removed to Islington mad-house.

Mr. Norris of the Blue-Coat School was Richard Norris, Jr.

The reference to the poetry and Coleridge's publication of it shows that Lamb had already been invited to contribute to the second edition of Coleridge's *Poems*. The words 'and never' in the original have a line through them which might mean erasure, but, I think, does not.

'Your own judgment . . .' Mrs. Coleridge had just become a mother: David Hartley Coleridge was born on 19th September.

This was Coleridge's reply to Lamb's letter, as given in Gillman's *Life of Coleridge*:

[28th September 1796.]

Your letter, my friend, struck me with a mighty horror. It rushed upon me and stupefied my feelings. You bid me write you a religious letter; I am not a man who would attempt to insult the greatness of your anguish by any other consolation. Heaven knows that in the easiest fortunes there is much dissatisfaction and weariness of spirit; much that calls for the exercise of patience and resignation; but in storms, like these, that shake the dwelling and make the heart tremble, there is no middle way between despair and the yielding up of the whole spirit unto the guidance of faith. And surely it is a matter of joy, that your faith in Jesus has been preserved; the Comforter that should relieve you is not far from you. But as you are a Christian, in the name of that Saviour, who was filled with bitterness and made drunken with wormwood, I conjure you to have recourse in frequent prayer to 'his God and your God,' the God of mercies, and father of all comfort. Your poor father is, I hope, almost senseless of the calamity; the unconscious instrument of Divine Providence knows it not, and your mother is in heaven. It is sweet to be roused from a frightful dream by the song of birds, and the gladsome rays of the morning. Ah, how infinitely more sweet to be awakened from the blackness and amazement of a sudden horror, by the glories of God manifest, and the hallelujahs of angels.

As to what regards yourself, I approve altogether of your abandoning what you justly call vanities. I look upon you as a man, called by sorrow and anguish and a strange desolation of hopes into quietness, and a soul set apart and made peculiar to God; we cannot arrive at any portion of heavenly bliss without in some measure imitating Christ. And they arrive at the largest inheritance who imitate the most difficult parts of his character, and bowed down and crushed under foot, cry in fullness of faith, 'Father, thy will be done.'

I wish above measure to have you for a little while here—no visitants shall

blow on the nakedness of your feelings—you shall be quiet, and your spirit may be healed. I see no possible objection, unless your father's helplessness prevent you, and unless you are necessary to him. If this be not the case, I charge you write me that you will come.

I charge you, my dearest friend, not to dare to encourage gloom or despair—you are a temporary sharer in human miseries, that you may be an eternal partaker of the Divine nature. I charge you, if by any means it be possible, come to me.

I remain, your affectionate,

S. T. COLERIDGE.]

9. TO S. T. COLERIDGE

[P.M. 3rd October 1796.]

My dearest friend, your letter was an inestimable treasure to me. It will be a comfort to you, I know, to know that our prospects are somewhat brighter. My poor dear dearest sister, the unhappy and unconscious instrument of the Almighty's judgments to our house, is restored to her senses; to a dreadful sense and recollection of what has past, awful to her mind, and impressive (as it must be to the end of life) but temper'd with religious resignation, and the reasonings of a sound judgment, which in this early stage knows how to distinguish between a deed committed in a transient fit of frenzy, and the terrible guilt of a Mother's murder. I have seen her. I found her this morning calm and serene, far very very far from an indecent forgetful serenity; she has a most affectionate and tender concern for what has happend. Indeed from the beginning, frightful and hopeless as her disorder seemed, I had confidence enough in her strength of mind, and religious principle, to look forward to a time when *even she* might recover tranquillity. God be praised, Coleridge, wonderful as it is to tell, I have never once been otherwise than collected, and calm; even on the dreadful day and in the midst of the terrible scene I preserved a tranquillity, which bystanders may have construed into indifference, a tranquillity not of despair; is it folly or sin in me to say that it was a religious principle that *most* supported me? I allow much to other favorable circumstances. I felt that I had something else to do than to regret; on that first evening my Aunt was lying insensible,

to all appearance like one dying,—my father, with his poor forehead plaisterd over from a wound he had received from a daughter dearly loved by him, and who loved him no less dearly,—my mother a dead and murder'd corpse in the next room—yet was I wonderfully supported. I closed not my eyes in sleep that night, but lay without terrors and without despair. I have lost no sleep since. I had been long used not to rest in things of sense, had endeavored after a comprehension of mind, unsatisfied with the 'ignorant present time,' and this kept me up. I had the whole weight of the family thrown on me, for my brother, little disposed (I speak not without tenderness for him) at any time to take care of old age and infirmities, had now, with his bad leg, an exemption from such duties, and I was now left alone. One little incident may serve to make you understand my way of managing my mind. Within a day or 2 after the fatal ONE, we drest for dinner a tongue, which we had had salted for some weeks in the house. As I sat down a feeling like remorse struck me,—this tongue poor Mary got for me, and can I partake of it now, when she is far away—a thought occurred and relieved me,—if I give in to this way of feeling, there is not a chair, a room, an object in our rooms, that will not awaken the keenest griefs, I must rise above such weaknesses.—I hope this was not want of true feeling. I did not let this carry me, tho', too far. On the very 2d day (I date from the day of horrors) as is usual in such cases there were a matter of 20 people I do think supping in our room. They prevailed on me to eat *with them* (for to eat I never refused). They were all making merry! in the room,—some had come from friendship, some from busy curiosity, and some from Interest; I was going to partake with them, when my recollection came that my poor dead mother was lying in the next room, the very next room, a mother who thro' life wished nothing but her children's welfare—indignation, the rage of grief, something like remorse, rushed upon my mind in an agony of emotion,—I found my way mechanically to the adjoining room, and fell on my knees by the side of her coffin, asking forgiveness of heaven, and sometimes of her, for forgetting her so soon. Tranquillity returned, and it was the only violent emotion that mastered me, and I think it did me good.

I mention these things because I hate concealment, and love

to give a faithful journal of what passes within me. Our friends have been very good. Sam Le Grice who was then in town was with me the first 3 or 4 days, and was as a brother to me, gave up every hour of his time, to the very hurting of his health and spirits, in constant attendance and humouring my poor father. Talk'd with him, read to him, play'd at cribbage with him (for so short is the old man's recollection, that he was playing at cards, as tho' nothing had happened, while the Coroner's Inquest was sitting over the way!) Samuel wept tenderly when he went away, for his mother wrote him a very severe letter on his loitering so long in town, and he was forced to go. Mr. Norris of Christ Hospital has been as a father to me, Mrs. Norris as a mother; tho' we had few claims on them. A Gentleman, brother to my Godmother, from whom we never had right or reason to expect any such assistance, sent my father twenty pounds,—and to crown all these God's blessings to our family at such a time, an old Lady, a cousin of my father and Aunt's, a Gentlewoman of fortune, is to take my Aunt and make her comfortable for the short remainder of her days.

My Aunt is recover'd and as well as ever, and highly pleased at thoughts of going,—and has generously given up the interest of her little money (which was formerly paid my Father for her board) wholly and solely to my Sister's use. Reckoning this we have, Daddy and I, for our two selves and an old maid servant to look after him, when I am out, which will be necessary, £170 or £180 (rather) a year, out of which we can spare 50 or 60 at least for Mary, while she stays at Islington, where she must and shall stay during her father's life for his and her comfort. I know John will make speeches about it, but she shall not go into an hospital. The good Lady of the mad house, and her daughter, an elegant sweet behaved young Lady, love her and are taken with her amazingly, and I know from her own mouth she loves them, and longs to be with them as much.—Poor thing, they say she was but the other morning saying, she knew she must go to Bethlem for life: that one of her brothers would have it so, but the other would wish it not, but be obliged to go with the stream; that she had often as she passed Bedlam thought it likely 'here it may be my fate to end my days—' conscious of a certain flightiness in her poor head oftentimes, and mindful of more than one severe

illness of that nature before. A Legacy of £100, which my father will have at Xmas, and this 20 I mentioned before, with what is in the house will much more than set us Clear;—if my father, an old servant maid, and I, can't live and live comfortably on £130 or £120 a year we ought to burn by slow fires, and I almost would, that Mary might not go into an hospital. Let me not leave one unfavourable impression on your mind respecting my Brother. Since this has happened he has been very kind and brotherly; but I fear for his mind,—he has taken his ease in the world, and is not fit himself to struggle with difficulties, nor has much accustomed himself to throw himself into their way,—and I know his language is already, 'Charles, you must take care of yourself, you must not abridge yourself of a single pleasure you have been used to,' &c &c and in that style of talking. But you, a necessarian, can respect a difference of mind, and love what *is amiable* in a character not perfect. He has been very good, but I fear for his mind. Thank God, I can unconnect myself with him, and shall manage all my father's monies in future myself, if I take charge of Daddy, which poor John has not even hinted a wish, at any future time even, to share with me. The Lady at this mad house assures me that I may dismiss immediately both Doctor and apothecary, retaining occasionally an opening draught or so for a while, and there is a less expensive establishment in her house, where she will only not have a room and nurse to herself for £50 or guineas a year—the outside would be 60—You know by oeconomy how much more, even, I shall be able to spare for her comforts.

She will, I fancy, if she stays, make one of the family, rather than of the patients, and the old and young ladies I like exceedingly, and she loves dearly, and they, as the saying is, take to her very extraordinarily, if it is extraordinary that people who see my sister should love her. Of all the people I ever saw in the world my poor sister was most and thoroughly devoid of the least tincture of selfishness—I will enlarge upon her qualities, poor dear dearest soul, in a future letter for my own comfort, for I understand her thoroughly; and if I mistake not, in the most trying situation that a human being can be found in, she will be found (I speak not with sufficient humility, I fear, but humanly and foolishly speaking) she will be found, I trust, uniformly great

and amiable; God keep her in her present mind, to whom be thanks and praise for all His dispensations to mankind.

LAMB.

Coleridge, continue to write; but do not for ever offend me by talking of sending me cash. Sincerely, and on my soul, we do not want it. God love you both!

I will write again very soon. Do you write directly.

These mentioned good fortunes and change of prospects had almost brought my mind over to the extreme the very opposite to Despair; I was in danger of making myself too happy; your letter brought me back to a view of things which I had entertained from the beginning; I hope (for Mary I can answer) but I hope that I shall thro' life never have less recollection nor a fainter impression of what has happened than I have now; 'tis not a light thing, nor meant by the Almighty to be received lightly. I must be serious, circumspect, and deeply religious thro' life; by such means may *both* of us escape madness in future, if it so please the Almighty.

Send me word, how it fares with Sara. I repeat it, your letter was and will be an inestimable treasure to me; you have a view of what my situation demands of me like my own view; and I trust a just one.

[A word on Lamb's salary might, perhaps, be fitting here. For the first three years, from joining the East India House on 5th April 1792, he received nothing official, but an annual gratuity of £30 was made to him. This probationary period over, he was given £40 for the year 1795-6. This, however, was raised to £70 in 1796 and there were means of adding to it a little, by extra work and by a small holiday grant. In 1797 it was £80, in 1799 £90, and from that time until 1814 it rose by £10 every second year.

Samuel Le Grice was the younger brother of Valentine Le Grice. Both were at Christ's Hospital with Lamb and Coleridge and are mentioned in the *Elia* essay on the school. Sam Le Grice afterwards had a commission in the 60th Foot, and died in Jamaica in 1802, as we shall see.]

10. TO S. T. COLERIDGE

[P.M. 17th October 1796.]

My dearest friend, I grieve from my very soul to observe you in your plans of life veering about from this hope to the other,

and settling no where. Is it an untoward fatality (speaking humanly) that does this for you, a stubborn irresistible concurrence of events? or lies the fault, as I fear it does, in your own mind? You seem to be taking up splendid schemes of fortune only to lay them down again, and your fortunes are an ignis fatuus that has been conducting you, in thought, from Lancaster Court, Strand, to somewhere near Matlock, then jumping across to Dr. Somebody's whose son's tutor you were likely to be, and would to God the dancing demon *may* conduct you at last in peace and comfort to the 'life and labors of a cottager.' You see from the above awkward playfulness of fancy, that my spirits are not quite depressed; I should ill deserve God's blessings, which since the late terrible event have come down in mercy upon us, if I indulged regret or querulousness,—Mary continues serene and chearful,—I have not by me a little letter she wrote to me, for, tho' I see her almost every day yet we delight to write to one another (for we can scarce see each other but in company with some of the people of the house), I have not the letter by me but will quote from memory what she wrote in it. 'I have no bad terrifying dreams. At midnight when I happen to awake, the nurse sleeping by the side of me, with the noise of the poor mad people around me, I have no fear. The spirit of my mother seems to descend, and smile upon me, and bid me live to enjoy the life and reason which the Almighty has given me—I shall see her again in heaven; she will then understand me better; my Grandmother too will understand me better, and will then say no more, as she used to do, 'Polly, what are those poor crazy moyther'd brains of yours thinking of always?'"—Poor Mary, my Mother indeed *never understood* her right. She loved her, as she loved us all, with a Mother's love; but in opinion, in feeling, and sentiment, and disposition, bore so distant a resemblance to her daughter, that she never understood her right. Never could believe how much *she* loved her—but met her caresses, her protestations of filial affection, too frequently with coldness and repulse.—Still she was a good mother, God forbid I should think of her but *most* respectfully, *most* affectionately. Yet she would always love my brother above Mary, who was not worthy of one tenth of that affection, which Mary had a right to claim. But it is my sister's gratifying recollection, that every act of duty and of

love she could pay, every kindness (and I speak true, when I say to the hurting of her health, and, most probably, in great part to the derangement of her senses) thro' a long course of infirmities and sickness, she could shew her, SHE EVER DID. I will some day, as I promised, enlarge to you upon my Sister's excellencies; 'twill seem like exaggeration; but I will do it. At present short letters suit my state of mind best. So take my kindest wishes for your comfort and establishment in life, and for Sara's welfare and comforts with you. God love you; God love us all——

C. LAMB.

[This letter is the only one in which Lamb speaks freely of his mother. He dwells on her memory in *Blank Verse*, 1798, but in later years he mentioned her in his writings only twice—in the *Elia* essays 'New Year's Eve' and 'My First Play'—and then very indirectly: probably from the wish to spare his sister pain, although Talfourd tells us that Mary Lamb spoke of her mother often. We can be more sensitive for others than they need. Compare the poem on page 77.

In Letter No. 148, written by Mary Lamb to Sarah Stoddart on 21st September 1803, there is further light on Mrs. Lamb's want of sympathetic understanding of certain characters.

The references at the beginning are to Coleridge's idea of joining Perry on the *Morning Chronicle*; of teaching Mrs. Evans's children; of establishing a school at Derby, on the suggestion of Dr. Crompton; and finally of moving from Bristol to settle down in a cottage at Nether Stowey, and support himself by husbandry and literature.]

11. TO S. T. COLERIDGE

Oct. 24th, 1796.

Coleridge, I feel myself much your debtor for that spirit of confidence and friendship which dictated your last letter. May your soul find peace at last in your cottage life! I only wish you were *but* settled. Do continue to write to me. I read your letters with my sister, and they give us both abundance of delight. Especially they please us two, when you talk in a religious strain,—not but we are offended occasionally with a certain freedom of expression, a certain air of mysticism, more consonant to the conceits of pagan philosophy, than consistent with the humility of genuine piety. To instance now in your last letter—you say, 'it is by the press [*sic*], that God hath given finite spirits both evil

and good (I suppose you mean *simply* bad men and good men) a portion as it were of His Omnipresence!' Now, high as the human intellect comparatively will soar, and wide as its influence, malign or salutary, can extend, is there not, Coleridge, a distance between the Divine Mind and it, which makes such language blasphemy? Again, in your first fine consolatory epistle you say, 'you are a temporary sharer in human misery, that you may be an eternal partaker of the Divine Nature.' What more than this do those men say, who are for exalting the man Christ Jesus into the second person of an unknown Trinity,—men, whom you or I scruple not to call idolaters? Man, full of imperfections, at best, and subject to wants which momentarily remind him of dependence; man, a weak and ignorant being, 'servile' from his birth 'to all the skiey influences,' with eyes sometimes open to discern the right path, but a head generally too dizzy to pursue it; man, in the pride of speculation, forgetting his nature, and hailing in himself the future God, must make the angels laugh. Be not angry with me, Coleridge; I wish not to cavil; I know I cannot *instruct* you; I only wish to *remind* you of that humility which best becometh the Christian character. God, in the New Testament (*our best guide*), is represented to us in the kind, condescending, amiable, familiar light of a *parent*: and in my poor mind 'tis best for us so to consider of Him, as our *heavenly* Father, and our *best Friend*, without indulging too bold conceptions of His nature. Let us learn to think humbly of ourselves, and rejoice in the appellation of 'dear children,' 'brethren,' and 'co-heirs with Christ of the promises,' seeking to know no further.

I am not insensible, indeed I am not, of the value of that first letter of yours, and I shall find reason to thank you for it again and again long after that blemish in it is forgotten. It will be a fine lesson of comfort to us, whenever we read it; and read it we often shall, Mary and I.

Accept our loves and best kind wishes for the welfare of yourself and wife, and little one. Nor let me forget to wish you joy on your birthday so lately past; I thought you had been older. My kind thanks and remembrances to Lloyd.

God love us all, and may He continue to be the father and the friend of the whole human race!

Sunday Evening.

C. LAMB.

[It is interesting to notice that with these letters Lamb suddenly assumes a gravity, independence, and sense of authority that hitherto his correspondence has lacked. The responsibility of the household seems to have awakened his unusual and precocious common sense and fine understanding sense of justice. Previously he had ventured to criticize only Coleridge's literary exercises; he places his finger now on conduct too.]

Coleridge's 'last letter' has not been preserved; but the 'first fine consolatory epistle' is printed above.

This letter contains the first mention of Charles Lloyd (1775-1839), who was afterwards to be for a while so intimately associated with Lamb. Charles Lloyd was the son of a Quaker banker of Birmingham. He had published a volume of poems the year before and had met Coleridge when that magnetic visionary had visited Birmingham to solicit subscribers for the *Watchman* early in 1796. The proposition that Lloyd should live with Coleridge and become in a way his pupil was agreed to by his parents, and in September he accompanied the philosopher to Bristol a day or so after David Hartley's birth, all eager to begin domestication and tutelage. Lloyd was a sensitive, delicate youth, with an acute power of analysis and considerable grasp of metaphysical ideas. No connection ever began more amiably. He was, I might add, by only two days Lamb's junior.]

12. TO S. T. COLERIDGE

Oct. 28th, 1796.

My dear Friend, I am not ignorant that to be a partaker of the Divine Nature is a phrase to be met with in Scripture: I am only apprehensive, lest we in these latter days, tintured (some of us perhaps pretty deeply) with mystical notions and the pride of metaphysics, might be apt to affix to such phrases a meaning, which the primitive users of them, the simple fishermen of Galilee for instance, never intended to convey. With that other part of your apology I am not quite so well satisfied. You seem to me to have been straining your comparing faculties to bring together things infinitely distant and unlike; the feeble narrow-sphered operations of the human intellect and the everywhere diffused mind of Deity, the peerless wisdom of Jehovah. Even the expression appears to me inaccurate—portion of omnipresence—omnipresence is an attribute whose very essence is unlimitedness. How can omnipresence be affirmed of anything in part? But enough of this spirit of disputatiousness. Let us attend to the proper business of human life, and talk a little together respecting

our domestic concerns. Do you continue to make me acquainted with what you were doing, and how soon you are likely to be settled once for all.

I have satisfaction in being able to bid you rejoice with me in my sister's continued reason and composedness of mind. Let us both be thankful for it. I continue to visit her very frequently, and the people of the house are vastly indulgent to her; she is likely to be as comfortably situated in all respects as those who pay twice or thrice the sum. They love her, and she loves them, and makes herself very useful to them. Benevolence sets out on her journey with a good heart, and puts a good face on it, but is apt to limp and grow feeble, unless she calls in the aid of self-interest by way of crutch. In Mary's case, as far as respects those she is with, 'tis well that these principles are so likely to co-operate. I am rather at a loss sometimes for books for her,—our reading is somewhat confined, and we have nearly exhausted our London library. She has her hands too full of work to read much, but a little she must read; for reading was her daily bread.

Have you seen Bowles's new poem on 'Hope?' What character does it bear? Has he exhausted his stores of tender plaintiveness? or is he the same in this last as in all his former pieces? The duties of the day call me off from this pleasant intercourse with my friend—so for the present adieu.

Now for the truant borrowing of a few minutes from business. Have you met with a new poem called the 'Pursuits of Literature?' From the extracts in the 'British Review' I judge it to be a very humorous thing; in particular I remember what I thought a very happy character of Dr. Darwin's poetry. Among all your quaint readings did you ever light upon Walton's 'Complete Angler?' I asked you the question once before; it breathes the very spirit of innocence, purity, and simplicity of heart; there are many choice old verses interspersed in it; it would sweeten a man's temper at any time to read it; it would Christianise every discordant angry passion; pray make yourself acquainted with it. Have you made it up with Southey yet? Surely one of you two must have been a very silly fellow, and the other not much better, to fall out like boarding-school misses; kiss, shake hands, and make it up?

When will he be delivered of his new epic? *Madoc*, I think, is

to be the name of it; though that is a name not familiar to my ears. What progress do you make in your hymns? What Review are you connected with? If with any, why do you delay to notice White's book? You are justly offended at its profaneness; but surely you have undervalued its wit, or you would have been more loud in its praises. Do not you think that in *Slender's* death and madness there is most exquisite humour, mingled with tenderness, that is irresistible, truly Shakspearian? Be more full in your mention of it. Poor fellow, he has (very undeservedly) lost by it; nor do I see that it is likely ever to reimburse him the charge of printing, etc. Give it a lift, if you can. I suppose you know that Allen's wife is dead, and he, just situated as he was, never the better, as the worldly people say, for her death, her money with her children being taken off his hands. I am just now wondering whether you will ever come to town again, Coleridge; 'tis among the things I dare not hope, but can't help wishing. For myself, I can live in the midst of town luxury and superfluity, and not long for them, and I can't see why your children might not hereafter do the same. Remember, you are not in Arcadia when you are in the west of England, and they may catch infection from the world without visiting the metropolis. But you seem to have set your heart upon this same cottage plan; and God prosper you in the experiment! I am at a loss for more to write about; so 'tis as well that I am arrived at the bottom of my paper.

God love you, Coleridge!—Our best loves and tenderest wishes await on you, your Sara, and your little one.

[Bowles's poem was *Hope, an allegorical sketch on slowly recovering from sickness*. See notes on pages 26 and 82.

The Pursuits of Literature was a literary satire in the form of dialogues in verse, garnished with very outspoken notes, by Thomas James Mathias (1754?–1835), which appeared between 1794 and 1797.

Southey had returned from Portugal in the summer, when the quarrel between Coleridge and himself revived; but about the time of Hartley's birth some kind of a reconciliation was patched up. *Mador*, as it happened, was not published until 1805, although in its first form it was completed in 1797.

Writing to Charles Lloyd, sen., in December 1796, Coleridge says that he gives his evenings to his engagements with the *Critical Review* and *New Monthly Magazine*.

This is the passage in *Falstaff's Letters* describing *Slender's* death:

DAVY TO SHALLOW

Master Abram is dead, gone, your Worship—dead! Master Abram! Oh! good your Worship, a's gone.—A' never throve, since a' came from Windsor—'twas his death. I call'd him a rebel, your Worship—but a' was all subject—a' was subject to any babe, as much as a King—a' turn'd, like as it were the latter end of a lover's lute—a' was all peace and resignation—a' took delight in nothing but his book of songs and sonnets—a' would go to the Stroud side under the large beech tree, and sing, till 'twas quite pity of our lives to mark him; for his chin grew as long as a muscle—Oh! a' sung his soul and body quite away—a' was lank as any greyhound, and had such a scent! I hid his love-songs among your Worship's law-books; for I thought if a' could not get at them, it might be to his quiet; but a' snuff'd 'em out in a moment.—Good your Worship, have the wise woman of Brentford secured—Master Abram may have been conjured—Peter Simple says, a' never look'd up, after a' sent to the wise woman—Marry, a' was always given to look down afore his elders; a' might do it, a' was given to it—your Worship knows it; but then 'twas peak and pert with him—a' was a man again, marry, in the turn of his heel.—A' died, your Worship, just about one, at the crow of the cock.—I thought how it was with him; for a' talk'd as quick, aye, marry, as glib as your Worship; and a' smiled, and look'd at his own nose, and call'd 'Sweet Ann Page.' I ask'd him if a' would eat—so a' bade us commend him to his Cousin Robert (a' never call'd your Worship so before) and bade us get hot meat, for a' would not say nay to Ann again.¹—But a' never liv'd to touch it—a' began all in a moment to sing *Lovers all, a Madrigal*. 'Twas the only song Master Abram ever learnt out of book, and clean by heart, your Worship—and so a' sung, and smiled, and look'd askew at his own nose, and sung, and sung on, till his breath waxed shorter, and shorter, and shorter, and a' fell into a struggle and died. I beseech your Worship to think he was well tended—I look'd to him, your Worship, late and soon, and crept at his heel all day long, an it had been any fallow dog—but I thought a' could never live, for a' did so sing, and then a' never drank with it—I knew 'twas a bad sign—yea, a' sung, your Worship, marry, without drinking a drop.]

13. TO S. T. COLERIDGE

Nov. 8th, 1796.

My Brother, my Friend,—I am distrest for you, believe me I am; not so much for your painful, troublesome complaint, which, I trust, is only for a time, as for those anxieties which brought

¹ Vide *Merry Wives of Windsor*. Latter part of the first scene, first act.

it on, and perhaps even now may be nursing its malignity. Tell me, dearest of my friends, is your mind at peace, or has anything, yet unknown to me, happened to give you fresh disquiet, and steal from you all the pleasant dreams of future rest? Are you still (I fear you are) far from being comfortably settled? Would to God it were in my power to contribute towards the bringing of you into the haven where you would be! But you are too well skilled in the philosophy of consolation to need my humble tribute of advice; in pain and in sickness, and in all manner of disappointments, I trust you have that within you which shall speak peace to your mind. Make it, I entreat you, one of your puny comforts, that I feel for you, and share all your griefs with you. I feel as if I were troubling you about *little* things; now I am going to resume the subject of our last two letters, but it may divert us both from unpleasanter feelings to make such matters, in a manner, of importance. Without further apology, then, it was not that I did not relish, that I did not in my heart thank you for, those little pictures of your feelings which you lately sent me, if I neglected to mention them. You may remember you had said much the same things before to me on the same subject in a former letter, and I considered those last verses as only the identical thoughts better clothed; either way (in prose or verse) such poetry must be welcome to me. I love them as I love the Confessions of Rousseau, and for the same reason: the same frankness, the same openness of heart, the same disclosure of all the most hidden and delicate affections of the mind: they make me proud to be thus esteemed worthy of the place of friend-confessor, brother-confessor, to a man like Coleridge. This last is, I acknowledge, language too high for friendship; but it is also, I declare, too sincere for flattery. Now, to put on stilts, and talk magnificently about trifles—I condescend, then, to your counsel, Coleridge, and allow my first Sonnet (sick to death am I to make mention of my sonnets, and I blush to be so taken up with them, indeed I do)—I allow it to run thus, ‘*Fairy Land*’ &c. &c., as I [?] you] last wrote it.

The Fragments I now send you I want printed to get rid of ’em; for, while they stick bur-like to my memory, they tempt me to go on with the idle trade of versifying, which I long—most sincerely I speak it—I long to leave off, for it is unprofitable to

my soul; I feel it is; and these questions about words, and debates about alterations, take me off, I am conscious, from the properer business of *my* life. Take my sonnets once for all, and do not propose any re-amendments, or mention them again in any shape to me, I charge you. I blush that my mind can consider them as things of any worth. And pray admit or reject these fragments, as you like or dislike them, without ceremony. Call 'em Sketches, Fragments, or what you will, but do not entitle any of my *things* Love Sonnets, as I told you to call 'em; 'twill only make me look little in my own eyes; for it is a passion of which I retain *nothing*; 'twas a weakness, concerning which I may say, in the words of Petrarch (whose life is now open before me), 'if it drew me out of some vices, it also prevented the growth of many virtues, filling me with the love of the creature rather than the Creator, which is the death of the soul.' Thank God, the folly has left me for ever; not even a review of my love verses renews one wayward wish in me; and if I am at all solicitous to trim 'em out in their best apparel, it is because they are to make their appearance in good company. Now to my fragments. Lest you have lost my Grandame, she shall be one. 'Tis among the few verses I ever wrote (that to Mary is another) which profit me in the recollection. God love her,—and may we two never love each other less!

These, Coleridge, are the few sketches I have thought worth preserving; how will they relish thus detached? Will you reject all or any of them? They are thine: do whatsoever thou listest with them. My eyes ache with writing long and late, and I wax wondrous sleepy; God bless you and yours, me and mine! Good night.

C. LAMB.

I will keep my eyes open reluctantly a minute longer to tell you, that I love you for those simple, tender, heart-flowing lines with which you conclude your last, and in my eyes best, sonnet (so you call 'em),

So, for the mother's sake, the child was dear,
And dearer was the mother for the child.

Cultivate simplicity, Coleridge, or rather, I should say, banish elaborateness; for simplicity springs spontaneous from the heart,

and carries into daylight its own modest buds and genuine, sweet, and clear flowers of expression. I allow no hot-beds in the gardens of Parnassus. I am unwilling to go to bed, and leave my sheet unfilled (a good piece of nightwork for an idle body like me), so will finish with begging you to send me the earliest account of your complaint, its progress, or (as I hope to God you will be able to send me) the tale of your recovery, or at least amendment. My tenderest remembrances to your Sara.—

Once more good night.

[Coleridge, on 2nd November, had begun to suffer from his lifelong enemy, neuralgia, the result largely of worry concerning his future, so many of his projects having broken down. He was subduing it with laudanum—the beginning of that fatal habit.

We do not know what were the verses which Coleridge had sent Lamb, but probably the three sonnets on the birth of Hartley, the third of which is referred to below.

Lamb's decision in September to say or hear no more of his own poetry here breaks down. The reference to the Fairy Land sonnet is only partially explained by the parallel version which I printed on pages 24–5; for 'Faery Land' was Coleridge's version. Either Lamb had made a new version, substituting 'Fairy Land' for 'Faery,' or he wrote, 'I allow it to run thus, "*Fairy Land*," &c. &c., as you last wrote it.' When reprinted, however, it ran as Lamb originally wished. The other fragments were those afterwards included in Coleridge's *Poems*, second edition, 1797.

'Love Sonnets.' Lamb changed his mind again on this subject, and yet again.

Coleridge's last of the three sonnets on the birth of Hartley was entitled *Sonnet to a Friend* [Charles Lloyd] *who asked how I felt when the Nurse first presented my Infant to me*. It closed with the lines which Lamb copies.]

14. TO S. T. COLERIDGE

Nov. 14th, 1796.

Coleridge, I love you for dedicating your poetry to Bowles. Genius of the sacred fountain of tears, it was he who led you gently by the hand through all this valley of weeping, showed you the dark green yew trees and the willow shades where, by the fall of waters, you might indulge an uncomplaining melancholy, a delicious regret for the past, or weave fine visions of that awful future,

When all the vanities of life's brief day
 Oblivion's hurrying hand hath swept away,
 And all its sorrows, at the awful blast
 Of the archangel's trump, are but as shadows past.

I have another sort of dedication in my head for my few things, which I want to know if you approve of, and can insert. I mean to inscribe them to my sister. It will be unexpected, and it will give her pleasure; or do you think it will look whimsical at all? As I have not spoke to her about it, I can easily reject the idea. But there is a monotony in the affections, which people living together or, as we do now, very frequently seeing each other, are apt to give in to: a sort of indifference in the expression of kindness for each other, which demands that we should sometimes call to our aid the trickery of surprise. Do you publish with Lloyd or without him? in either case my little portion may come last, and after the fashion of orders to a country correspondent I will give directions how I should like to have 'em done. The title-page to stand thus:—

POEMS,
 CHIEFLY LOVE SONNETS
 BY
 CHARLES LAMB, OF THE INDIA HOUSE.

Under this title the following motto, which, for want of room, I put over leaf, and desire you to insert, whether you like it or no. May not a gentleman choose what arms, mottoes, or armorial bearings the herald will give him leave, without consulting his republican friend, who might advise none? May not a publican put up the sign of the Saracen's Head, even though his undiscerning neighbour should prefer, as more genteel, the Cat and Gridiron?

(MOTTO.)

This beauty, in the blossom of my youth,
 When my first fire knew no adulterate incense,
 Nor I no way to flatter but my fondness,
 In the best language my true tongue could tell me,
 And all the broken sighs my sick heart lend me,
 I sued and served. Long did I love this lady.

MASSINGER.

THE DEDICATION

THE FEW FOLLOWING POEMS,
CREATURES OF THE FANCY AND THE FEELING
IN LIFE'S MORE VACANT HOURS,
PRODUCED, FOR THE MOST PART, BY
LOVE IN IDLENESS,
ARE,
WITH ALL A BROTHER'S FONDNESS,
INSCRIBED TO
MARY ANN LAMB,
THE AUTHOR'S BEST FRIEND AND SISTER.

This is the pomp and paraphernalia of parting, with which I take my leave of a passion which has reigned so royally (so long) within me; thus, with its trappings of laureatship, I fling it off, pleased and satisfied with myself that the weakness troubles me no longer. I am wedded, Coleridge, to the fortunes of my sister and my poor old father. Oh! my friend, I think sometimes, could I recall the days that are past, which among them should I choose? not those 'merrier days,' not the 'pleasant days of hope,' not 'those wanderings with a fair hair'd maid,' which I have so often and so feelingly regretted, but the days, Coleridge, of a *mother's* fondness for her *school-boy*. What would I give to call her back to earth for *one* day, on my knees to ask her pardon for all those little asperities of temper which, from time to time, have given her gentle spirit pain; and the day, my friend, I trust will come; there will be 'time enough' for kind offices of love, if 'Heaven's eternal year' be ours. Hereafter, her meek spirit shall not reproach me. Oh, my friend, cultivate the filial feelings! and let no man think himself released from the kind 'charities' of relationship: these shall give him peace at the last; these are the best foundation for every species of benevolence. I rejoice to hear, by certain channels, that you, my friend, are reconciled with all your relations. 'Tis the most kindly and natural species of love, and we have all the associated train of early feelings to secure its strength and perpetuity. Send me an account of your health; *indeed* I am solicitous about you. God love you and yours.

C. LAMB.

[It seems to have been Coleridge's intention to dedicate the second edition of his *Poems* to Bowles; but he changed his mind and dedicated it to his brother, the Rev. George Coleridge. A sonnet to Bowles was included in the volume, a kind of sub-dedication of the other sonnets, but it had appeared also in the 1796 volume.

Lamb's instructions concerning his share in the 1797 volume were carried out, except that the sub-title was omitted.

The quotations 'merrier days' and 'wanderings with a fair hair'd maid' are from Lamb's own sonnets; those below them from Dryden's *Elegy on Mrs. Killigrew*.

Coleridge had paid in the summer a long-deferred visit of reconciliation to his family at Ottery St. Mary.]

15. TO S. T. COLERIDGE

[P.M. 2nd December 1796.]

I have delay'd writing thus long, not having by me my copy of your poems, which I had lent. I am not satisfied with all your intended omissions. Why omit 40: 63: 84: above all, let me protest strongly against your rejecting the 'Complaint of Nínathoma,' 86. The words, I acknowledge, are Ossian's, but you have added to them the 'Music of Caril.' If a vicarious substitute be wanting, sacrifice (and 'twill be a piece of self-denial too) the Epitaph on an Infant, of which its Author seems so proud, so tenacious. Or, if your heart be set on *perpetuating* the four-line-wonder, I'll tell you what [to] do: sell the copyright of it at once to a country statuary; commence in this manner Death's prime poet laureat; and let your verses be adopted in every village round instead of those hitherto famous ones 'Afflictions sore long time I bore, Physicians were in vain.' I have seen your last very beautiful poem in the Monthly Magazine—write thus, and you most generally have written thus, and I shall never quarrel with you about simplicity. With regard to my lines 'Laugh all that weep,' etc.—I would willingly sacrifice them, but my portion of the volume is so ridiculously little, that in honest truth I can't spare them. As things are, I have very slight pretensions to participate in the title-page.—White's book is at length reviewed in the Monthly; was it your doing, or Dyer's to whom I sent him? Or rather do you not write in the Critical? for I observed, in an Article of this Month's a line quoted out of

that sonnet on Mrs. Siddons 'with eager wond'ring and perturb'd delight'—and a line from *that* sonnet would not readily have occurred to a stranger. That sonnet, Coleridge, brings afresh to my mind the time when you wrote those on Bowles, Priestly, Burke—'twas 2 Christmases ago, and in that nice little smoky room at the Salutation, which is even now continually presenting itself to my recollection, with all its associated train of pipes, tobacco, Egghot, welch Rabbits, metaphysics and Poetry.

Are we NEVER to meet again? How differently I am circumstanced now—I have never met with any one, never shall meet with any one, who could or can compensate me for the loss of your society—I have no one to talk all these matters about to—I lack friends, I lack books to supply their absence. But these complaints ill become me: let me compare my present situation, prospects, and state of mind, with what they were but 2 months back—but 2 months. O my friend, I am in danger of forgetting the awful lessons then presented to me—remind me of them; remind me of my Duty. Talk seriously with me when you do write. I thank you, from my heart I thank you, for your sollicitude about my Sister. She is quite well,—but must not, I fear, come to live with us yet a good while. In the first place, because at present it would hurt her, and hurt my father, for them to be together: secondly from a regard to the world's good report, for I fear, I fear, tongues will be busy *whenever* that event takes place. Some have hinted, one man has prest it on me, that she should be in perpetual confinement—what she hath done to deserve, or the necessity of such an hardship, I see not; do you? I am starving at the India house, near 7 o'clock without my dinner, and so it has been and will be almost all the week. I get home at night o'erwearied, quite faint,—and then to CARDS with my father, who will not let me enjoy a meal in peace—but I must conform to my situation, and I hope I am, for the most part, not unthankful.

I am got home at last, and, after repeated games at Cribbage have got my father's leave to write awhile: with difficulty got it, for when I expostulated about playing any more, he very aptly replied, 'If you won't play with me, you might as well not come home at all.' The argument was unanswerable, and I set to afresh.

I told you, I do not approve of your omissions. Neither do I quite coincide with you in your arrangements: I have not time to point out a better, and I suppose some self-associations of your own have determined their place as they now stand. Your beginning indeed with the Joan of Arc lines I coincide entirely with: I love a splendid Outset, a magnificent Portico; and the Diapason is Grand—the Religious Musings—when I read them, I think how poor, how unelevated, unoriginal, my blank verse is, ‘Laugh all that weep’ especially, where the subject demanded a grandeur of conception: and I ask what business they have among yours—but Friendship covereth a multitude of defects. Why omit 73? At all events, let me plead for those former pages,—40. 63. 84. 86. I should like, for old acquaintance sake, to spare 62. 119 would have made a figure among *Shenstone’s* Elegies: you may admit it or reject, as you please. In the Man of Ross let the old line stand as it used: ‘wine-cheer’d moments’ much better than the lame present one. 94, change the harsh word ‘foodful’ into ‘dulcet’ or, if not too harsh, ‘nourishing.’ 91, ‘moveless’: is that as good as ‘moping’?—8, would it not read better omitting those 2 lines last but 6 about Inspiration? I want some loppings made in the Chatterton; it wants but a little to make it rank among the finest irregular Lyrics I ever read. Have you time and inclination to go to work upon it—or is it too late—or do you think it needs none? Don’t reject those verses in one of your Watchmen—‘Dear native brook’ &c.—nor, I think, those last lines you sent me, in which ‘all effortless’ is without doubt to be preferred to ‘inactive.’ If I am writing more than ordinarily dully, ’tis that I am stupified with a tooth-ache. 37, would not the concluding lines of the 1st paragraph be well omitted—& it go on ‘So to sad sympathies’ &c.? In 40, if you retain it, ‘wove’ the learned Toil is better than ‘urge,’ which spoils the personification. Hang it, do not omit 48. 52. 53. What you do retain tho’, call sonnets for God’s sake, and not effusions,—spite of your ingenious anticipation of ridicule in your Preface. The last 5 lines of 50 are too good to be lost, the rest is not much worth. My tooth becomes importunate—I must finish. Pray, pray, write to me: if you knew with what an anxiety of joy I open such a long packet as you last sent me, you would not grudge giving a few minutes now and

then to this intercourse (the only intercourse, I fear we two shall ever have), this conversation, with your friend—such I boast to be called.

God love you and yours.

Write to me when you move, lest I direct wrong.

Has Sara no poems to publish? Those lines 129 are probably too light for the volume where the *Religious Musings* are—but I remember some very beautiful lines address by somebody at Bristol to somebody at London.

God bless you once more.

C. LAMB.

Thursday Night.

[This letter refers to the preparation of Coleridge's second edition of his *Poems*. 'Why omit 40: 63: 84?'—these were *Absence*, *To the Autumnal Moon*, and the imitation from Ossian.

The *Epitaph on an Infant* ran thus:

Ere Sin could blight, or Sorrow fade,
Death came with friendly care;
The opening bud to Heaven conveyed
And bade it blossom there.

Many years later Lamb applied the first two lines to a sucking pig in his *Elia* essay on 'Roast Pig.' The old epitaph runs:

Afflictions sore long time I bore,
Physicians were in vain;
Till Heaven did please my woes to ease,
And take away my pain.

Coleridge's 'very beautiful poem' in the *Monthly Magazine* (for October) was *Reflections on Entering into Active Life*, beginning, 'Low was our pretty cot.'

Lamb's lines, *Laugh all that weep*, I cannot find. We learn later that they were in blank verse.

Falstaff's Letters was reviewed in the *Monthly Review* for November 1796, very favourably. The article was quite possibly by Coleridge.

The sonnet on Mrs. Siddons was written by Lamb and Coleridge together, when Coleridge was in London at the end of 1794, and it formed one of a series of sonnets on eminent persons printed in the *Morning Chronicle*, of which those on Bowles, Priestley, and Burke were others. The quotation from it was in an article in the November *Critical Review* on the *Musæ Etonenses*.

'One man has prest it on me.' There is reason to suppose that this was John Lamb, the brother.

As it happened Coleridge did not begin his second edition with the *Joan of Arc* lines, but with the *Ode to the New Year*. The *Religious Musings* brought Coleridge's part of the volume to a close.

The poem on page 73 was *In the Manner of Spenser*. The poems on pages 40, 63, 84, we know; that on page 86 was *The Complaint of Ninathoma*. *To Genevieve* was on page 62. That on page 119 was *To a Friend in Answer to a Melancholy Letter*. Coleridge never restored the phrase 'wine-cheer'd moments' to *The Man of Ross*. He did not change 'foodful' to 'dulcet' in *To an Infant*. He did not alter 'moveless' to 'moping' in *The Young Ass*. He left the Inspiration passage as it was in the *Monody on Chatterton*. Not that he disregarded all Lamb's advice, as a comparison of the 1796 and 1797 editions of the *Poems* will show.

The poem *Dear native brook* was the sonnet *To the River Otter*. Coleridge took Lamb's counsel. The poem containing the phrase 'all effortless' was that *Addressed to a Young Man of Fortune* (Charles Lloyd). Coleridge did not include it. The poem on page 37 was *To a Young Lady with a Poem on the French Revolution*. Nos. 48, 52, and 53 were the sonnets to Priestley, Kosciuszko, and Fayette. The last five lines of 50 were in the sonnet to Sheridan. The lines on page 129 were Sara's verses *The Silver Thimble*. None of these were reprinted in 1797. The beautiful lines addressed from somebody at Bristol to somebody at London were those from Sara Coleridge to Lamb, referred to on page 32. Coleridge persisted in the use of the word 'effusion.']

16. TO S. T. COLERIDGE

[Dated at end: 5th December 1796.]

TO A YOUNG LADY GOING OUT TO INDIA

Hard is the heart, that does not melt with Ruth
 When care sits cloudy on the brow of Youth,
 When bitter griefs the female bosom swell
 And Beauty meditates a fond farewell
 To her loved native land, and early home,
 In search of peace thro' 'stranger climes to roam.'¹

The Muse, with glance prophetic, sees her stand,
 Forsaken, silent Lady, on the strand
 Of farthest India, sickening at the war
 Of waves slow-beating, dull upon the shore
 Stretching, at gloomy intervals, her eye
 O'er the wide waters vainly to espy
 The long-expected bark, in which to find
 Some tidings of a world she has left behind.

¹ Bowles. *The African*, line 27.

In that sad hour shall start the gushing tear
 For scenes her childhood loved, now doubly dear,
 In that sad hour shall frantic memory awake
 Pangs of remorse for slighted England's sake,
 And for the sake of many a tender tie
 Of Love or Friendship pass'd too lightly by.
 Unwept, unpitied, midst an alien race,
 And the cold looks of many a stranger face,
 How will her poor heart bleed, and chide the day,
 That from her country took her far away.

[*Lamb has struck his pen through the foregoing poem.*]

Coleridge, the above has some few decent [lines in] it, and in the paucity of my portion of your volume may as well be inserted; I would also wish to retain the following if only to perpetuate the memory of so exquisite a pleasure as I have often received at the performance of the tragedy of Douglas, when Mrs. Siddons has been the Lady Randolph. Both pieces may be inserted between the sonnets and the sketches—in which latter, the last leaf but one of them, I beg you to alter the words 'pain and want' to 'pain and grief,' this last being a more familiar and ear-satisfying combination. Do it I beg of you. To understand the following, if you are not acquainted with the play, you should know that on the death of Douglas his mother threw herself down a rock; and that at that time Scotland was busy in repelling the Danes.

THE TOMB OF DOUGLAS

(*See the Tragedy, of that name*)

When her son, her Douglas died,
 To the steep rock's fearful side
 Fast the frantic mother hied.

O'er her blooming warrior dead
 Many a tear did Scotland shed,
 And shrieks of long and loud lament
 From her Grampian hills she sent.

Like one awakening from a trance,
 She met the shock of Lochlin's lance.
 On her rude invader foe
 Return'd an hundred fold the blow.

Denmark

Drove the taunting spoiler home:
Mournful thence she took her way
To do observance at the tomb,
Where the son of Douglas [lay].

Round about the tomb did go
In solemn state and order slow,
Silent pace, and black attire,
Earl, or Knight, or good Esquire,
Who e'er by deeds of valour done
In battle had high honors won;
Whoe'er in their pure veins could trace
The blood of Douglas' noble race.

With them the flower of minstrels came,
And to their cunning harps did frame
In doleful numbers piercing rhimes,
Such strains as in the olden times
Had soothed the spirit of Fingal
Echoing thro' his fathers' Hall.

Scottish maidens, drop a tear
O'er the beauteous Hero's bier.
Brave youth and comely 'bove compare;
All golden shone his burnish'd hair;
Valor and smiling courtesy
Played in the sunbeams of his eye.
Closed are those eyes that shone so fair
And stain'd with blood his yellow hair.
Scottish maidens drop a tear
O'er the beauteous Hero's bier.

Not a tear, I charge you, shed
For the false Glenalvon dead;
Unpitied let Glenalvon lie,
Foul stain to arms and chivalry.

Behind his back the traitor came,
And Douglas died without his fame.

[Lamb has struck his pen through the lines against which I have put
an asterisk.]

- * Scottish maidens, drop a tear,
- * O'er the beauteous hero's bier.
- * Bending warrior, o'er thy grave,
Young light of Scotland early spent!
Thy country thee shall long lament,
- * Douglas 'Beautiful and Brave'!

Is 'morbid wantonness of woe'
a good and allowable phrase?

And oft to after times shall tell,
In Hope's sweet prime my Hero fell.

[*Lamb has struck his pen through the remainder.*]

Thane or Lordling, think no scorn
 Of the poor and lowly-born.
 In brake obscure or lonely dell
 The simple flowret prospers well;
 The gentler virtues cottage-bred,
 Thrive best beneath the humble shed.
 Low-born Hinds, opprest, obscure,
 Ye who patiently endure
 To bend the knee and bow the head,
 And thankful eat *another's bread*
 Well may ye mourn your best friend dead,
 Till Life with Grief together end:
 He would have been the poor man's friend.

omitted

Bending, warrior, o'er thy grave,
 Young light of Scotland early spent!
 Thy country thee shall long lament,
 Douglas, '*Beautiful and Brave*'!
 And oft to after times shall tell,
In life's young prime my Hero fell.

omitted

omitted

At length I have done with verse making. Not that I relish other people's poetry less,—theirs comes from 'em without effort, mine is the difficult operation of a brain scanty of ideas, made more difficult by disuse. I have been reading the 'Task' with fresh delight. I am glad you love Cowper. I could forgive a man for not enjoying Milton, but I would not call that man my friend, who should be offended with the 'divine chit-chat of Cowper.' Write to me.—God love you and yours,

C. L.

[The name of the young lady going out to India is not known; the verses were printed in the *Monthly Magazine* for March 1797, but were not included in Lamb's section of Coleridge's *Poems*, 1797. *The Tomb of Douglas* was, however, there. The poem in which the alteration 'pain and grief' was to be made (but was not made, or was made and cancelled later) was *Fancy Employed on Divine Subjects*.

The marginal note about 'morbid wantonness' refers to Coleridge's lines *To a Young Man of Fortune*, which we come to again later. Coleridge ultimately changed 'morbid' to 'fantastic.'

The 'divine chit-chat of Cowper' was Coleridge's own phrase. It is a pretty circumstance that since 1888 Lamb and Cowper have shared (with Keats) a memorial in Edmonton Church, although Cowper is there solely on account of the route taken by John Gilpin on his famous ride.]

17. TO S. T. COLERIDGE

[Little Queen Street, *Night of 9th December.*] 1796.

I am sorry I cannot now relish your poetical present as thoroughly as I feel it deserves; but I do not the less thank Lloyd and you for it.

In truth, Coleridge, I am perplexed, & at times almost cast down. I am beset with perplexities. The old hag of a wealthy relation, who took my aunt off our hands in the beginning of trouble, has found out that she is 'indolent and mulish'—I quote her own words—and that her attachment to us is so strong that she can never be happy apart. The Lady, with delicate Irony, remarks that, if I am not an Hypocrite, I shall rejoyce to receive her again; and that it will be a means of making me more fond of home to have so dear a friend to come home to! The fact is, she is jealous of my aunt's bestowing any kind recollections on us, while she enjoys the patronage of her roof. She says she finds it inconsistent with her own 'ease and tranquillity' to keep her any longer, & in fine summons me to fetch her home. Now, much as I should rejoyce to transplant the poor old creature from the chilling air of such patronage, yet I know how straitend we are already, how unable already to answer any demand which sickness or any extraordinary expence may make. I know this, and all unused as I am to struggle with perplexities I am somewhat nonplused, to say no worse. This prevents me from a thorough relish of what Lloyd's kindness and yours have furnished me with. I thank you tho from my heart, and feel myself not quite alone in the earth.

Before I offer, what alone I have to offer, a few obvious remarks on the poems you sent me, I can[not] but notice the odd coincidence of two young men, in one age, carolling their grandmothers. Love—what L[lloyd] calls 'the feverish and romantic

tye'—hath too long domineerd over all the charities of home: the dear domestic ties of father, brother, husband. The amiable and benevolent Cowper has a beautiful passage in his 'Task,'—some natural and painful reflections on his deceased parents: and Hayley's sweet lines to his mother are notoriously the best things he ever wrote. Cowper's lines, some of them, are:

How gladly would the man recall to life
The boy's neglected sire; a mother, too,
That softer name, perhaps more gladly still,
Might he demand them at the gates of death.

I cannot but smile to see my Granny so gayly deck'd forth: tho', I think, whoever altered 'thy' praises to 'her' praises, 'thy' honoured memory to 'her' honoured memory, did wrong—they best exprest my feelings. There is a pensive state of recollection, in which the mind is disposed to apostrophise the departed objects of its attachment, and, breaking loose from grammatical precision, changes from the 1st to the 3rd, and from the 3rd to the 1st person, just as the random fancy or the feeling directs. Among Lloyd's sonnets, 6th, 7th, 8th, 9th, and 11th, are eminently beautiful. I think him too lavish of his expletives; the *do's* and *did's*, when they occur too often, bring a quaintness with them along with their simplicity, or rather air of antiquity which the patrons of them seem desirous of conveying.

The lines on Friday are very pleasing—'Yet calls itself in pride of Infancy woman or man,' &c., 'affection's tottering troop'—are prominent beauties. Another time, when my mind were more at ease, I could be more particular in my remarks, and I would postpone them now, only I want some diversion of mind. The *Melancholy Man* is a charming piece of poetry, only the 'whys' (with submission) are too many. Yet the questions are too good to be any of 'em omitted. For those lines of yours, page 18, omitted in magazine, I think the 3 first better retain'd—the 3 last, which are somewhat simple in the most affronting sense of the word, better omitted: to this my taste directs me—I have no claim to prescribe to you. 'Their slothful loves and dainty sympathies' is an exquisite line, but you knew *that* when you wrote 'em, and I trifle in pointing such out. 'Tis altogether the sweetest thing to me you ever wrote—tis all honey. 'No

wish profaned my overwhelmed heart, Blest hour, it was a Luxury to be,—I recognise feelings, which I may taste again, if tranquility has not taken his flight for ever, and I will not believe but I shall be happy, very happy again. The next poem to your friend is very beautiful: need I instance the pretty fancy of ‘the rock’s collected tears’—or that original line ‘pour’d all its healthful greenness on the soul’?—let it be, since you asked me, ‘as neighbouring fountains each reflect the whole’—tho’ that is somewhat harsh; indeed the ending is not so finish’d as the rest, which if you omit in your forthcoming edition, you will do the volume wrong, and the very binding will cry out. Neither shall you omit the 2 following poems. ‘The hour when we shall meet again,’ is fine fancy, tis true, but fancy catering in the Service of the feeling—fetching from her stores most splendid banquets to satisfy her. Do not, do not omit it. Your sonnet to the *River Otter* excludes those equally beautiful lines, which deserve not to be lost, ‘as the tired savage,’ &c., and I prefer that copy in your *Watchman*. I plead for its preference.

Another time, I may notice more particularly Lloyd’s, Southey’s, Dermody’s Sonnets. I shrink from them now: my teasing lot makes me too confused for a clear judgment of things, too selfish for sympathy; and these ill-digested, meaningless remarks I have imposed on myself as a task, to lull reflection, as well as to show you I did not neglect reading your valuable present. Return my acknowledgments to Lloyd; you two appear to be about realising an Elysium upon earth, and, no doubt, I shall be happier. Take my best wishes. Remember me most affectionately to Mrs. C., and give little David Hartley—God bless its little heart!—a kiss for me. Bring him up to know the meaning of his Christian name, and what that name (imposed upon him) will demand of him.

C. LAMB.

God love you!

I write, for one thing, to say that I shall write no more till you send me word where you are, for you are so soon to move.

My sister is pretty well, thank God. We think of you very often. God bless you: continue to be my correspondent, and I will strive to fancy that this world is *not* ‘all barrenness.’

[Lamb’s Aunt Hetty, to whom the second paragraph refers, was very soon after this to get her release from the troubles of life.

The poetical present, as Dykes Campbell pointed out in the *Athenæum*, 13th June 1891, consisted of Lloyd's *Poems on the Death of Priscilla Farmer*, to which Lamb had contributed *The Grandame*, and of a little privately-printed collection of poems by Coleridge and Lloyd, which they had intended to publish, but did not. This pamphlet has completely vanished. In addition to these two works, the poetical present also comprised another privately-printed collection, a little pamphlet of twenty-eight sonnets which Coleridge had arranged for the purpose of binding up with those of Bowles. It included three of Bowles's, four of Coleridge's, four of Lamb's, four of Southey's, and the remainder by Dermody, Lloyd, Charlotte Smith, and others. A copy is preserved in the South Kensington Museum.

'The poems you sent me.' This would be Lloyd's *Poems on the Death of Priscilla Farmer*, a rather sumptuous quarto: hence the phrase about Granny being so 'gaily deck'd forth.' When Lamb reprinted *The Grandame* in Coleridge's second edition, 1797, he put back the original text.

I now take up Dykes Campbell's comments on the letter, where it branches off from the *Priscilla Farmer* volume to the vanished pamphlet of poems by Coleridge and Lloyd:

Beginning with Lloyd's *Melancholy Man* (first printed in the Carlisle volume of 1795), he [Lamb] passes to Coleridge's poem on leaving the honeymoon-cottage at Clevedon, 'altogether the sweetest thing to me,' says Lamb, 'you ever wrote.' The verses had appeared in the *Monthly Magazine* two months before. . . . That Lamb's counsel was followed to some extent may be gathered from a comparison between the text of the magazine and that of 1797:

Once I saw
(Hallowing his sabbath-day by quietness)
A wealthy son of Commerce saunter by,
Bristowa's citizen: he paus'd, and look'd,
With a pleas'd sadness, and gazed all around,
Then ey'd our Cottage, and gaz'd round again,
And said, *it was a blessed little place!*
And we were blessed!

Monthly Magazine.

Once I saw
(Hallowing his Sabbath-day by quietness)
A wealthy son of Commerce saunter by,
Bristowa's citizen. Methought it calm'd
His thirst of idle gold, and made him muse
With wiser feelings: for he paus'd, and look'd
With a pleas'd sadness, and gaz'd all around,
Then ey'd our cottage, and gaz'd round again,
And sigh'd and said, *it was a blessed place.*
And we were blessed.

Poems, 1797.

It will be observed that Coleridge in 1797 inserted some lines which were not in the magazine. They were probably restored from a MS. copy Lamb

had previously seen, and if Coleridge did not cancel all that Lamb wisely counselled, he certainly drew the sting of the 'affronting simplicity' by removing the word 'little.' The comical ambiguity of the Bristol man's exclamation as first reported could hardly have failed to drive Lamb's dull care away for a moment or two.

[In] 'the next poem to your friend,' . . . [Lamb is] speaking of Coleridge's lines *To Charles Lloyd*—those beginning

A mount, not wearisome and bare and steep.

In the 'forthcoming edition' the poet improved a little the barely tolerated line, making it read:

As neighb'ring fountains image, each the whole,

but did not take Lamb's hint to omit the five which closed the poem. Lamb, however, got his way—perhaps took it—when the verses were reprinted in 1803, in the volume he saw through the press for Coleridge.

'Neither shall you omit the 2 following poems. *The hour when we shall meet again* is [only?] fine fancy, tis true, but fancy catering in the Service of the feeling—fetching from her stores most splendid banquets to satisfy her. Do not, do not omit it.'

So wrote Lamb of these somewhat slender verses, but his friend had composed them 'during illness and in absence,' and Lamb in his own heart-sickness and loneliness detected the reality which underlay the conventionality of expression. The critic slept, and even when he was awake again in 1803 was fain to let the lines be reprinted with only the concession of their worst couplet:

While finely-flushing float her kisses meek,
Like melted rubies, o'er my pallid cheek.

The second of the '2 following poems' was Coleridge's *Sonnet to the River Otter*. The version then before him 'excludes,' complains Lamb, 'those equally beautiful lines, which deserve not to be lost, "as the tired savage," &c., and I prefer the copy in your *Watchman*. I plead for its preference.' This pleading . . . was not responded to in the way Lamb wanted, but in the appendix to the 1797 volume Coleridge printed the whole of the poem on an *Autumnal Evening*, to which the 'tired savage' properly belonged. . . .

'Lloyd's, Southey's, Dermody's Sonnets.' Lamb here refers to the third portion of the poetical present—the twenty-eight sonnets to be bound up with those of Bowles. Thomas Dermody (1775–1802) was an Irish poet of squalidly dissolute life, whose work was held in high opinion by many good judges. Two small volumes of his juvenile verses were published in Dublin and two of his maturer poems appeared in his lifetime. In 1807 these were collected with a memoir.

This is the last letter to carry the Little Queen Street address. What was left of the family—that is John Lamb, senior, Charles, Aunt Hetty, and a maid-servant—soon after moved to 45 Little Chapel Street, Pentonville. John Lamb the younger probably did not join them there.]

18. TO S. T. COLERIDGE

Dec. 10th, 1796.

I had put my letter into the post rather hastily, not expecting to have to acknowledge another from you so soon. This morning's present has made me alive again: my last night's epistle was childishly querulous; but you have put a little life into me, and I will thank you for your remembrance of me, while my sense of it is yet warm; for if I linger a day or two I may use the same phrase of acknowledgment, or similar; but the feeling that dictates it now will be gone. I shall send you a *caput mortuum*, not a *cor vivens*. Thy Watchman's, thy bellman's, verses, I do retort upon thee, thou libellous varlet,—why, you cried the hours yourself, and who made you so proud? But I submit, to show my humility, most implicitly to your dogmas. I reject entirely the copy of verses you reject. With regard to my leaving off versifying, you have said so many pretty things, so many fine compliments, ingeniously decked out in the garb of sincerity, and undoubtedly springing from a present feeling somewhat like sincerity, that you might melt the most un-muse-ical soul,—did you not (now for a Rowland compliment for your profusion of Olivers)—did you not in your very epistle, by the many pretty fancies and profusion of heart displayed in it, dissuade and discourage me from attempting anything after you. At present I have not leisure to make verses, nor anything approaching to a fondness for the exercise. In the ignorant present time, who can answer for the future man? 'At lovers' perjuries Jove laughs'—and poets have sometimes a disingenuous way of forswearing their occupation. This though is not my case. The tender cast of soul, sombred with melancholy and subsiding recollections, is favourable to the Sonnet or the Elegy; but from

The sainted growing woof,
The teasing troubles keep aloof.

The music of poesy may charm for a while the importunate teasing cares of life; but the teased and troubled man is not in a disposition to make that music.

You sent me some very sweet lines relative to Burns, but it was at a time when, in my highly agitated and perhaps distorted state

of mind, I thought it a duty to read 'em hastily and burn 'em. I burned all my own verses, all my book of extracts from Beaumont and Fletcher and a thousand sources: I burned a little journal of my foolish passion which I had a long time kept:

Noting ere they past away
The little lines of yesterday.

I almost burned all your letters,—I did as bad, I lent 'em to a friend to keep out of my brother's sight, should he come and make inquisition into our papers, for, much as he dwelt upon your conversation while you were among us, and delighted to be with you, it has been his fashion ever since to depreciate and cry you down,—you were the cause of my madness—you and your damned foolish sensibility and melancholy—and he lamented with a true brotherly feeling that we ever met, even as the sober citizen, when his son went astray upon the mountains of Parnassus, is said to have 'cursed wit and Poetry and Pope.' I quote wrong, but no matter. These letters I lent to a friend to be out of the way for a season; but I have claimed them in vain, and shall not cease to regret their loss. Your packets, posterior to the date of my misfortunes, commencing with that valuable consolatory epistle, are every day accumulating—they are sacred things with me.

Publish your *Burns* when and how you like, it will be new to me,—my memory of it is very confused, and tainted with unpleasant associations. Burns was the god of my idolatry, as Bowles of yours. I am jealous of your fraternising with Bowles, when I think you relish him more than Burns or my old favourite, Cowper. But you conciliate matters when you talk of the 'divine chit-chat' of the latter: by the expression I see you thoroughly relish him. I love Mrs. Coleridge for her excuses an hundredfold more dearly than if she heaped 'line upon line,' out-Hannah-ing Hannah More, and had rather hear you sing 'Did a very little baby' by your family fire-side, than listen to you when you were repeating one of Bowles's sweetest sonnets in your sweet manner, while we two were indulging sympathy, a solitary luxury, by the fireside at the Salutation. Yet have I no higher ideas of heaven. Your company was one 'cordial in this melancholy vale'—the remembrance of it is a blessing partly, and partly

a curse. When I can abstract myself from things present, I can enjoy it with a freshness of relish; but it more constantly operates to an unfavourable comparison with the uninteresting; converse I always and *only* can partake in. Not a soul loves Bowles here; scarce one has heard of Burns; few but laugh at me for reading my Testament—they talk a language I understand not: I conceal sentiments that would be a puzzle to them. I can only converse with you by letter and with the dead in their books. My sister indeed, is all I can wish in a companion; but our spirits are alike poorly, our reading and knowledge from the self-same sources, our communication with the scenes of the world alike narrow: never having kept separate company, or any ‘company’ ‘*together*’—never having read separate books, and few books *together*—what knowledge have we to convey to each other? In our little range of duties and connexions, how few sentiments can take place, without friends, with few books, with a taste for religion rather than a strong religious habit! We need some support, some leading-strings to cheer and direct us. You talk very wisely, and be not sparing of *your advice*. Continue to remember us, and to show us you do remember us: we will take as lively an interest in what concerns you and yours. All I can add to your happiness, will be sympathy. You can add to mine *more*; you can teach me wisdom. I am indeed an unreasonable correspondent; but I was unwilling to let my last night’s letter go off without this qualifier: you will perceive by this my mind is easier, and you will rejoice. I do not expect or wish you to write, till you are moved; and of course shall not, till you announce to me that event, think of writing myself. Love to Mrs. Coleridge and David Hartley, and my kind remembrance to Lloyd, if he is with you. C. LAMB.

I will get ‘Nature and Art,’—have not seen it yet—nor any of Jeremy Taylor’s works.

[The reference to the bellman’s verses (at Easter the bellman, or watchman, used to leave verses at the houses on his beat as a reminder of his usefulness) is not quite clear. Lamb evidently had submitted for the new volume some lines which Coleridge would not pass.

‘At lovers’ perjuries, they say, Jove laughs.’ *Romeo and Juliet*, II. ii. 92.

Coleridge some time before had sent to Lamb the very sweet lines relative to Burns, under the title, *To a Friend who had Declared His Intention of Writing no more Poetry*.

'Did a very little baby.' In the Appendix to vol. i of the 1847 edition of the *Biog. Lit.*, Sara Coleridge writes, concerning children and domestic evenings, "'Did a very little babby make a very great noise?'" is the first line of a nursery song, in which Mr. Coleridge recorded some of his experience on this recondite subject.' The song has disappeared.

Nature and Art was Mrs. Inchbald's story, published in 1796. Lamb later became an enthusiast for Jeremy Taylor.]

19. TO S. T. COLERIDGE

[Dated outside: 2nd January 1797.]

Your success in the higher species of the Ode is such, as bespeaks you born for achievements of loftier enterprize than to linger in the lowly train of songsters and sonneteers. Sincerely I think your Ode one of the finest I have read. The opening is in the spirit of the sublimest allegory. The idea of the 'skirts of the departing year, seen far onwards, waving on the wind' is one of those noble Hints at which the Reader's imagination is apt to kindle into grand conceptions. Do the words 'impetuous' and 'solemnize' harmonize well in the same line? Think and judge. In the 2d strophe, there seems to be too much play of fancy to be consistent with that continued elevation we are taught to expect from the strain of the foregoing. The parenthized line (by the way I abominate parentheses in this kind of poetry) at the beginn^g of 7th page, and indeed all that gradual description of the throes and pangs of nature in childbirth, I do not much like, and those 4 first lines,—I mean 'tomb gloom anguish and languish'—rise not above mediocrity. In the Epode, your mighty genius comes again: 'I marked ambition' &c. Thro' the whole Epod indeed you carry along our souls in a full spring tide of feeling and imaginatⁿ. Here is the 'Storm of Music,' as Cowper expresses it. Would it not be more abrupt 'Why does the northern Conqueress stay' or 'where does the northern Conqueress stay'?—this change of measure, rather than the feebl^r 'Ah! whither.' 'Foul her life and dark her tomb, mighty army of the dead, dance like deathflies' &c.: here is genius, here is poetry, rapid, irresistible. The concluding line, is it not a personif: without use? 'Nec deus intersit'—except indeed for

rhyme sake. Would the laws of Strophe and antistrophe, which, if they are as unchangeable, I suppose are about as wise, [as] the Mede and Persian laws, admit of expunging that line altogether, and changing the preceding one to 'and he, poor madman, deemd it quenched in endless night?'—*fond* madman or *proud* madman if you will, but *poor* is more contemptuous. If I offer alterations of my own to your poetry, and admit not yours in mine, it is upon the principle of a present to a rich man being graciously accepted, and the same present to a poor man being considered as in insult. To return—The Antistrophe that follows is not inferior in grandeur or original: but is I think not faultless—e: g: How is Memory *alone*, when all the etherial multitude are there? Reflect. Again 'storiedst thy sad hours' is harsh, I need not tell you, but you have gained your point in expressing much meaning in few words: 'Purple locks and snow white glories' 'mild Arcadians ever blooming' 'seas of milk and ships of amber' these are things the Muse talks about when, to borrow H. Walpole's witty phrase, she is not finely-phrenzied, only a little light-headed, that's all. 'Purple locks.' They may manage things differently in fairy land, but your 'golden tresses' are more to my fancy. The spirit of the Earth is a most happy conceit, and the last line is one of the luckiest I ever heard—'*and stood up beautiful* before the cloudy seat.' I cannot enough admire it. 'Tis somehow picturesque in the very sound. The 2d Antistrophe (what is the meaning of these things?) is fine and faultless (or to vary the alliteration and not diminish the affectation) beautiful and blameless. I only except to the last line as meaningless after the preceding, and useless entirely—besides, why disjoin 'nature and the world' here, when you had confounded both in their pregnancy: 'the common earth and nature,' recollect, a little before—And there is a dismal superfluity in the unmeaning vocable 'unhurld'—the worse, as it is so evidently a rhyme-fetch.—'Death like he dozes' is a prosaic conceit—indeed all the Epode as far as 'brother's corse' I most heartily commend to annihilation. The enthusiast of the lyre should not be so feebly, so tediously, delineative of his own feelings; 'tis not the way to become 'Master of our affections.' The address to Albion is very agreeable, and concludes even beautifully: 'speaks safety to his island child'—'Sworded'—epithet I would

change for 'cruel.' The immediately succeeding lines are prosaic: 'mad avarice' is an unhappy combination; and 'the coward distance yet with kindling pride' is not only reprehensible for the antithetical turn, but as it is a quotation: 'safe distance' and 'coward distance' you have more than once had recourse to before—And the Lyric Muse, in her enthusiasm, should talk the language of her country, something removed from common use, something 'recent,' unborrowed. The dreams of destruction 'soothing her fierce solitude,' are vastly grand and terrific: still you weaken the effect by that superfluous and easily-conceived parenthesis that finishes the page. The foregoing image, few minds *could* have conceived, few tongues could have so cloath'd; 'muttring destempered triumph' &c. is vastly fine. I hate imperfect beginnings and endings. Now your concluding stanza is worthy of so fine an ode. The beginning was awakening and striking; the ending is soothing and solemn—Are you serious when you ask whether you shall admit this ode? it would be strange infatuation to leave out your Chatterton; merè insanity to reject this. Unless you are fearful that the splendid thing may be a means of 'eclipsing many a softer satellite' that twinkles thro' the volume. Neither omit the annex'd little poem. For my part, detesting alliterations, I should make the 1st line 'Away, with this fantastic pride of woe.' Well may you relish Bowles's allegory. I need only tell you, I have read, and will only add, that I dislike ambition's name *gilded* on his helmet-cap, and that I think, among the more striking personages you notice, you omitted the *most* striking, Remorse! 'He saw the trees—the sun—then hied him to his cave again'!!! The 2d stanza of mania is superfl: the 1st was never exceeded. The 2d is too methodic: for *her*. With all its load of beauties, I am more *affected* with the 6 first stanzas of the Elegiac poem written during sickness. Tell me your feelings.

If the fraternal sentiment conveyed in the following lines will atone for the total want of anything like merit or genius in it, I desire you will print it next after my other sonnet to my sister.

Friend of my earliest years, & childish days,
My joys, my sorrows, thou with me hast shared
Companion dear; & we alike have fared
Poor pilgrims we, thro' life's unequal ways

It were unwisely done, should we refuse
 To cheer our path, as feartly as we may,
 Our lonely path to cheer, as travellers use
 With merry song, quaint tale, or roundelay.
 And we will sometimes talk past troubles o'er,
 Of mercies shewn, & all our sickness heal'd,
 And in his judgments God remembring love;
 And we will learn to praise God evermore
 For those 'Glad tidings of great joy' reveal'd
 By that sooth messenger, sent from above.

1797.

If you think the epithet 'sooth' quaint, substitute 'blest messenger.' I hope you are printing my sonnets, as I directed you—particularly the 2d. 'Methinks' &c. with my last added 6 lines at ye end: and all of 'em as I last made 'em.

This has been a sad long letter of business, with no room in it for what honest Bunyan terms heart-work. I have just room left to congratulate you on your removal to Stowey; to wish success to all your projects; to 'bid fair peace' be to that house; to send my love and best wishes, breathed warmly, after your dear Sara, and her little David Hartley. If Lloyd be with you, bid him write to me: I feel to whom I am obliged primarily for two very friendly letters I have received already from him. A dainty sweet book that 'Art and Nature' is. I am at present re-re-reading Priestley's examinat of the Scotch Drs: how the Rogue strings 'em up! three together! You have no doubt read that clear, strong, humorous, most entertaining piece of reasoning. If not, procure it, and be exquisitely amused. I wish I could get more of Priestley's works. Can you recommend me to any more books, easy of access, such as circulating shops afford? God bless you and yours.

Poor Mary is very unwell with a sore throat and a slight species of scarlet fever. God bless her too.

Monday Morning, at Office.

[In order that Lamb's criticisms may be appreciated I append the text of Coleridge's *Ode on the Departing Year* from the text of the quarto, 1796:

STROPHE I

Spirit, who sweepst the wild Harp of Time,
 It is most hard with an untroubled Ear
 Thy dark inwoven Harmonies to hear!
 Yet, mine eye fixt on Heaven's unchanged clime,

Long had I listen'd, free from mortal fear,
 With inward stillness and a bowed mind:
 When lo! far onwards waving on the wind
 I saw the skirts of the DEPARTING YEAR!
 Starting from my silent sadness
 Then with no unholy madness,
 Ere yet the entered cloud forbade my sight,
 I rais'd th' impetuous song, and solemnized his flight.

STROPHE II

Hither from the recent Tomb;
 From the Prison's direr gloom;
 From Poverty's heart-wasting languish:
 From Distemper's midnight anguish;
 Or where his two bright torches blending
 Love illumines Manhood's maze;
 Or where o'er cradled Infants bending
 Hope has fix'd her wishful gaze:
 Hither, in perplexed dance,
 Ye WOES, and young-eyed JOYS, advance!
 By Time's wild harp, and by the Hand
 Whose indefatigable Sweep
 Forbids its fateful strings to sleep,
 I bid you haste, a mixt tumultuous band!
 From every private bower,
 And each domestic hearth,
 Haste for one solemn hour;
 And with a loud and yet a louder voice
 O'er the sore travail of the common earth
 Weep and rejoice!
 Seiz'd in sore travail and portentous birth
 (Her eye-balls flashing a pernicious glare)
 Sick NATURE struggles! Hark—her pangs increase!
 Her groans are horrible! But O! most fair
 The promis'd Twins, she bears—EQUALITY and PEACE!

EPODE

I mark'd Ambition in his war-array:
 I heard the mailed Monarch's troublous cry—
 'Ah! whither does the Northern Conqueress stay?
 Groans not her Chariot o'er its onward way?'
 Fly, mailed Monarch, fly!
 Stunn'd by Death's 'twice mortal' mace
 No more on MURDER's lurid face
 Th' insatiate Hag shall glote with drunken eye!
 Manes of th' unnumbered Slain!
 Ye that gasp'd on WARSAW's plain!

Ye that erst at ISMAIL'S tower,
 When human Ruin chok'd the streams,
 Fell in Conquest's gluttoned hour
 Mid Women's shrieks, and Infants' screams;
 Whose shrieks, whose screams were vain to stir
 Loud-laughing, red-eyed Massacre!
 Spirits of th' uncoffin'd Slain,
 Sudden blasts of Triumph swelling
 Oft at night, in misty train
 Rush around her narrow Dwelling!
 Th' exterminating Fiend is fled—
 (Foul her Life and dark her Doom!)
 Mighty Army of the Dead,
 Dance, like Death-fires, round her Tomb!
 Then with prophetic song relate
 Each some scepter'd Murderer's fate!
 When shall scepter'd SLAUGHTER cease?
 Awhile He crouch'd, O Victor France!
 Beneath the light'ning of thy Lance,
 With treacherous dalliance wooing PEACE.
 But soon up-springing from his dastard trance
 The boastful, bloody Son of Pride betray'd
 His Hatred of the blest and blessing Maid.
 One cloud, O Freedom! cross'd thy orb of Light
 And sure, he deem'd, that Orb was quench'd in night:
 For still does MADNESS roam on GUILT'S bleak dizzy height!

ANTISTROPHE I

DEPARTING YEAR! 'twas on no earthly shore
 My Soul beheld thy Vision. Where, alone,
 Voiceless and stern, before the Cloudy Throne
 Aye MEMORY sits; there, garmented with gore,
 With many an unimaginable groan
 Thou storiedst thy sad Hours! Silence ensued:
 Deep Silence o'er th' ethereal Multitude,
 Whose purple Locks with snow-white Glories shone.
 Then, his eye wild ardors glancing,
 From the choired Gods advancing,
 The SPIRIT of the EARTH made reverence meet
 And stood up beautiful before the Cloudy Seat!

ANTISTROPHE II

On every Harp, on every Tongue
 While the mute Enchantment hung;
 Like Midnight from a thundercloud,
 Spake the sudden SPIRIT loud—

'Thou in stormy blackness throning
 Love and uncreated Light,
 By the Earth's unsolac'd groaning
 Seize thy terrors, Arm of Might!
 By Belgium's corse-impeded flood!
 By Vendee steaming Brother's blood!
 By PEACE with proffer'd insult scar'd,
 Masked hate, and envying scorn!
 By Years of Havoc yet unborn;
 And Hunger's bosom to the frost-winds bar'd!
 But chief by Afric's wrongs
 Strange, horrible, and foul!
 By what deep Guilt belongs
 To the deaf Synod, "full of gifts and lies!"
 By Wealth's insensate Laugh! By Torture's Howl!
 Avenger, rise!
 For ever shall the bloody Island scowl?
 For aye unbroken, shall her cruel Bow
 Shoot Famine's arrows o'er thy ravag'd World?
 Hark! how wide NATURE joins her groans below—
 Rise, God of Nature, rise! Why sleep thy Bolts unhurl'd?

EPODE II

The Voice had ceas'd, the Phantoms fled,
 Yet still I gasp'd and reel'd with dread.
 And ever when the dream of night
 Renews the vision to my sight,
 Cold sweat-damps gather on my limbs,
 My Ears throb hot, my eye-balls start,
 My Brain with horrid tumult swims,
 Wild is the Tempest of my Heart;
 And my thick and struggling breath
 Imitates the toil of Death!
 No uglier agony confounds
 The Soldier on the war-field spread,
 When all foredone with toil and wounds
 Death-like he dozes among heaps of Dead!
 (The strife is o'er, the day-light fled,
 And the Night-wind clamours hoarse;
 See! the startful Wretch's head
 Lies pillow'd on a Brother's Corse!)
 O doom'd to fall, enslav'd and vile,
 O ALBION! O my mother Isle!
 Thy valleys, fair as Eden's bowers,
 Glitter green with sunny showers;
 Thy grassy Upland's gentle Swells

Echo to the Bleat of Flocks;
 (Those grassy Hills, those glitt'ring Dells
 Proudly ramparted with rocks)
 And Ocean 'mid his uproar wild
 Speaks safety to his Island-child.
 Hence for many a fearless age
 Has social Quiet lov'd thy shore;
 Nor ever sworded Foeman's rage

Or sack'd thy towers, or stain'd thy fields with gore.
 Disclaim'd of Heaven! mad Av'rice at thy side,
 At coward distance, yet with kindling pride—
 Safe 'mid thy herds and corn-fields thou hast stood,
 And join'd the yell of Famine and of Blood.
 All nations curse thee: and with eager wond'ring
 Shall hear DESTRUCTION, like a vulture, scream!
 Strange-eyed DESTRUCTION, who with many a dream
 Of central flames thro' nether seas upthund'ring
 Soothes her fierce solitude, yet (as she lies
 Stretch'd on the marge of some fire-flashing fount
 In the black chamber of a sulphur'd mount,
 If ever to her lidless dragon eyes,
 O ALBION! thy predestin'd ruins rise,
 The Fiend-hag on her perilous couch doth leap,
 Mutt'ring distemper'd triumph in her charmed sleep.

Away, my soul, away!

In vain, in vain, the birds of warning sing—
 And hark! I hear the famin'd brood of prey
 Flap their lank pennons on the groaning wind!

Away, my Soul, away!

I unpartaking of the evil thing,
 With daily prayer, and daily toil
 Soliciting my scant and blameless soil,
 Have wail'd my country with a loud lament.
 Now I recenter my immortal mind
 In the long sabbath of high self-content;
 Cleans'd from the fleshly Passions that bedim
 God's Image, Sister of the Seraphim.

'Storm of Music.' In Cowper's *Table Talk*, line 491:

The storm of music shakes th' astonish'd crowd.

'Nec deus intersit': Nor let a god intervene. Horace, *Ars Poetica*, line 191.

'Mild Arcadians,' etc. The first phrase is from Pope's *Song by a Person of Quality*, the second from Coleridge's *Ode* under discussion, and the third from Otway's *Venice Preserv'd*, v. 2, last line:

Lutes, Laurels, Seas of Milk and Ships of Amber.

The 'annex'd little poem' was that *Addressed to a Young Man of Fortune*, which now began, and still begins, 'Hence that fantastic wantonness of woe.'

Bowles's allegory was *Hope, An Allegorical Sketch*, recently published.

Lamb's sonnet was not included in the 1797 volume, but was printed in the *Monthly Magazine*, October 1797. Coleridge had moved to his cottage at Nether Stowey on the last day of 1796.

'Bid fair peace.' *Lycidas*, line 22.

By 'Art and Nature' Lamb again means Mrs. Inchbald's *Nature and Art*.

Priestley's book would be *An Examination of Dr. Reid's Inquiry into the Human Mind on the Principles of Common Sense, Dr. Beattie's Essay on the Nature and Immutability of Truth, and Dr. Oswald's Appeal to Common Sense in Behalf of Religion*, 1774.

Mary Lamb was still an inmate of an institution, where her brother was a constant visitor.]

20. TO S. T. COLERIDGE

Saturday.

[P.M. 10th January 1797.]

I am completely reconciled to that second strophe, and wa[i]ve all objection. In spite of the Grecian Lyrists, I persist on [in] thinking your brief personification of Madness useless; reverence forbids me to say, impertinent. Golden locks and snow white glories are as incongruous as your former, and if the great Italian painters, of whom my friend knows about as much as the man in the moon, if these great gentlemen be on your side, I see no harm in retaining the purple—the glories that I have observed to encircle the heads of saints and madonnas in those old paintings have been mostly of a dirty drab-color'd yellow—a dull gambogium. Keep your old line: it will excite a confused kind of pleasurable idea in the reader's mind, not clear enough to be called a conception, nor just enough, I think, to reduce to painting. It is a rich line, you say, and riches hide a many faults. I maintain, that in the 2d antistrophe: you *do* disjoin Nature and the world, and contrary to your conduct in the 2d strophe. 'Nature joins her groans'—joins with *whom*, a God's name, but the world or earth in line preceding? But this is being over curious, I acknowledge. Nor *did* I call the *last* line useless, I only objected to 'unhurld.' I cannot be made to like the former part of that 2d Epode; I cannot be made to feel it, as I do the parallel places in Isaiah, Jeremy and Daniel. Whether it is that in the present case the rhyme impairs the efficacy; or that the circumstances are feigned, and we are 'conscious of a made up lye in the case, and the narrative is too long winded to preserve the semblance of truth; or that lines 8. 9. 10. 14 in partic: 17 and 18 are mean

and unenthusiastic; or that lines 5 to 8 in their change of rhyme shew like art—I don't know, but it strikes me as something meant to affect, and failing in its purpose. Remember my waywardness of feeling is single, and singly stands opposed to all your friends, and what is one among many! This I know, that your quotations from the prophets have never escaped me, and never fail'd to affect me strongly. I hate that simile. I am glad you have amended that parenthesis in the account of Destruction. I like it well now. Only alter [? omit] that history of child-bearing, and all will do well. Let the obnoxious Epode remain, to terrify such of your friends as are willing to be terrified. I think I would omit the Notes, not as not good per se, but as uncongenial with the dignity of the Ode. I need not repeat my wishes to have my little sonnets printed verbatim my last way. In particular, I fear lest you should prefer printing my first sonnet, as you have done more than once, 'did the wand of Merlin wave'? It looks so like *Mr. Merlin*, the ingenious successor of the immortal Merlin, now living in good health and spirits, and flourishing in magical reputation in Oxford Street; and on my life, one half who read it would understand it so. Do put 'em forth finally as I have, in various letters, settled it; for first a man's self is to be pleased, and then his friends,—and, of course the greater number of his friends, if they differ inter se. Thus taste may safely be put to the vote. I do long to see our names together—not for vanity's-sake, and naughty pride of heart altogether, for not a living soul, I know or am intimate with, will scarce read the book—so I shall gain nothing quoad famam,—and yet there is a little vanity mixes in it, I cannot help denying. I am aware of the unpoetical cast of the 6 last lines of my last sonnet, and think myself unwarranted in smuggling so tame a thing into the book; only the sentiments of those 6 lines are thoroughly congenial to me in my state of mind, and I wish to accumulate perpetuating tokens of my affection to poor Mary; that it has no originality in its cast, nor anything in the feelings, but what is common and natural to thousands, nor aught properly called poetry, I see; still it will tend to keep present to my mind a view of things which I ought to indulge. These 6 lines, too, have not, to a reader, a connectedness with the foregoing. Omit it, if you like.—What a treasure it is to my poor

indolent and unemployed mind, thus to lay hold on a subject to talk about, tho' 'tis but a sonnet and that of the lowest order. How mournfully inactive I am!—'Tis night: good-night.

My sister, I thank God, is nigh recovered. She was seriously ill. Do, in your next letter, and that right soon, give me some satisfaction respecting your present situation at Stowey. Is it a farm you have got? and what does your worship know about farming? Coleridge, I want you to write an Epic poem. Nothing short of it can satisfy the vast capacity of true poetic genius. Having one great End to direct all your poetical faculties to, and on which to lay out your hopes, your ambition, will shew you to what you are equal. By the sacred energies of Milton, by the dainty sweet and soothing phantasies of honeytongued Spenser, I adjure you to attempt the Epic. Or do something more ample than writing an occasional brief ode or sonnet; something 'to make yourself for ever known,—to make the age to come your own.' But I prate; doubtless you meditate something. When you are exalted among the Lords of Epic fame, I shall recall with pleasure, and exultingly, the days of your humility, when you disdained not to put forth in the same volume with mine, your religious musings, and that other poem from the Joan of Arc, those promising first fruits of high renown to come. You have learning, you have fancy, you have enthusiasm—you have strength and amplitude of wing enow for flights like those I recommend. In the vast and unexplored regions of fairyland, there is ground enough unfound and uncultivated; search there, and realize your favourite Susquehana scheme. In all our comparisons of taste, I do not know whether I have ever heard your opinion of a poet, very dear to me, the now out of fashion Cowley—favor me with your judgment of him, and tell me if his prose essays, in particular, as well as no inconsiderable part of his verse, be not delicious. I prefer the graceful rambling of his essays, even to the courtly elegance and ease of Addison—abstracting from this the latter's exquisite humour. Why is not your poem on Burns in the Monthly Magazine? I was much disappointed. I have a pleasurable but confused remembrance of it.

When the little volume is printed, send me 3 or 4, at all events not more than 6 copies, and tell me if I put you to any additional expence, by printing with you. I have no thought of the kind,

and in that case, must reimburse you. My epistle is a model of unconnectedness, but I have no partic: subject to write on, and must proportion my scribble in some degree to the increase of postage. It is not quite fair, considering how burdensome your correspondence from different quarters must be, to add to it with so little shew of reason. I will make an end for this evening. Sunday Even:—Farewell.

Priestly, whom I sin in almost adoring, speaks of 'such a choice of company, as tends to keep up that right bent, and firmness of mind, which a necessary intercourse with the world would otherwise warp and relax. Such fellowship is the true balsam of life, its cement is infinitely more durable than that of the friendships of the world, and it looks for its proper fruit, and complete gratification, to the life beyond the Grave.' Is there a possible chance for such an one as me to realize in this world, such friendships? Where am I to look for 'em? What testimonials shall I bring of my being worthy of such friendship? Alas! the great and good go together in separate Herds, and leave such as me to lag far far behind in all intellectual, and far more grievous to say, in all moral, accomplishments. Coleridge, I have not one truly elevated character among my acquaintance: not one Christian: not one but undervalues Christianity. Singly what am I to do? Wesley (have you read his life? was *he* not an elevated character?) Wesley has said, 'Religion is not a solitary thing.' Alas! it necessarily is so with me, or next to solitary. 'Tis true, you write to me. But correspondence by letter, and personal intimacy, are very widely different. Do, do write to me, and do some good to my mind, already how much 'warped and relaxed' by the world!—'Tis the conclusion of another evening. Good night. God have us all in his keeping.

If you are sufficiently at leisure, oblige me with an account of your plan of life at Stowey—your literary occupations and prospects—in short make me acquainted with every circumstance, which, as relating to you, can be interesting to me. Are you yet a Berkleyan? Make me one. I rejoice in being, speculatively, a necessarian. Would to God, I were habitually a practical one. Confirm me in the faith of that great and glorious doctrine, and keep me steady in the contemplation of it. You sometime since express an intention you had of finishing some extensive work on

the Evidences of Natural and Revealed Religion. Have you let that intention go? Or are you doing any thing towards it? Make to yourself other ten talents. My letter is full of nothingness. I talk of nothing. But I must talk. I love to write to you. I take a pride in it. It makes me think less meanly of myself. It makes me think myself not totally disconnected from the better part of Mankind. I know, I am too dissatisfied with the beings around me,—but I cannot help occasionally exclaiming ‘Woe is me, that I am constrained to dwell with Meshech, and to have my habitation among the tents of Kedar’—I know I am no ways better in practice than my neighbours—but I have a taste for religion, an occasional earnest aspiration after perfection, which they have not. I gain nothing by being with such as myself—we encourage one another in mediocrity—I am always longing to be with men more excellent than myself. All this must sound odd to you; but these are my predominant feelings, when I sit down to write to you, and I should put force upon my mind, were I to reject them. Yet I rejoyce, and feel my privilege with gratitude, when I have been reading some wise book, such as I have just been reading—Priestley on Philosophical necessity—in the thought that I enjoy a kind of communion, a kind of friendship even, with the great and good. Books are to me instead of friends. I wish they did not resemble the latter in their scarceness.—And how does little David Hartley? ‘Ecquid in antiquam virtutem?’—does his mighty name work wonders yet upon his little frame, and opening mind? I did not distinctly understand you,—you don’t mean to make an actual ploughman of him? Mrs. C—— is no doubt well,—give my kindest respects to her. Is Lloyd with you yet?—are you intimate with Southey? What poems is he about to publish—he hath a most prolific brain, and is indeed a most sweet poet. But how can you answer all the various mass of interrogation I have put to you in the course of this sheet. Write back just what you like, only write something, however brief. I have now nigh finished my page, and got to the end of another evening (Monday evening)—and my eyes are heavy and sleepy, and my brain unsuggestive. I have just heart enough awake to say Good night once more, and God love you my dear friend, God love us all. Mary bears an affectionate remembrance of you.

CHARLES LAMB.

[The criticisms contained in the first paragraph bear upon Coleridge's *Ode on the Departing Year*, which had already appeared twice, in the *Cambridge Intelligencer* and in a quarto issued by Cottle, and was now being revised for the second edition of the *Poems*.

The personification of Madness was contained in the line, afterwards omitted:

For still does Madness roam on Guilt's black dizzy height.

Lamb's objection to this line, considering his home circumstances at the time, was very natural. In Antistrophe I Coleridge originally said of the ethereal multitude in Heaven:

Whose purple Locks with snow-white Glories shone.

In the 1797 *Poems* the line ran:

Whose wreathed Locks with snow-white Glories shone;

and in the final version:

Whose locks with wreaths, whose wreaths with glories shone.

Coleridge must have supported his case, in the letter which Lamb is answering, by a reference to the Italian painters.

Coleridge in the 1797 edition of his *Poems* made no alteration to meet Lamb's strictures. The simile that Lamb hated is, I imagine, that of the soldier on the war field. 'That history of child-bearing' referred to is the passage at the end of Strophe II. To the quarto Coleridge had appended various notes. In 1797 he had only three, and added an argument.

The reference to Merlin will be explained by a glance at the parallel sonnets on page 24. Merlin was entirely Coleridge's idea. A conjuror of that name was just then among London's attractions. Mr. Blunden has found the following contemporary account of him: 'During the latter part of the eighteenth century, this ingenious mechanic, and musical instrument-maker, gratified the curious and tasteful, by the public exhibition of his organ, piano-forte, and other inventions, at his Museum, in Princes Street, Hanover Square. Merlin's mind was adequate to the embracing the whole compass of mechanical science and execution. . . . One of his ingenious novelties was a pair of skaites contrived to run on small metallic wheels.'

The 'last sonnet,' which was not the last in the 1797 volume, but the sixth, was that beginning 'If from my lips' (see first letter).

In connection with Lamb's question on the Stowey husbandry, the following quotation from a letter from Coleridge to the Rev. J. P. Estlin, belonging to this period, is interesting:

Our house is better than we expected—there is a comfortable bedroom and sitting-room for C. Lloyd, and another for us, a room for Nanny, a kitchen, and out-house. Before our door a clear brook runs of very soft water; and in the backyard is a nice well of fine spring water. We have a very pretty

garden, and large enough to find us vegetables and employment, and I am already an expert gardener, and both my hands can exhibit a callum as testimonials of their industry. We have likewise a sweet orchard.

Writing a little before this to Charles Lloyd, senior, Coleridge had said: 'My days I shall devote to the acquirement of practical husbandry and horticulture.'

The poem on Burns was that *To a Friend [Lamb] who had Declared His Intention of Writing no more Poetry*. It was printed first in a Bristol paper, and then in the *Annual Anthology*, 1800.

Priestley's remark is in the Dedication to John Lee, Esq., of Lincoln's Inn, of *A Free Discussion of the Doctrines of Materialism and Philosophical Necessity in a Correspondence between Dr. Price and Dr. Priestley, etc.*, included in *Disquisitions Relating to Matter and Spirit*, Vol. III, 1778. The discussion arose from the publication by Priestley of *The Doctrine of Philosophical Necessity Illustrated*, which itself is an appendage to *Disquisitions Relating to Matter and Spirit*.

Three lives at least of John Wesley were published in the two years following his death in 1791. Coleridge later studied Wesley closely, for he added valuable notes to Southey's life (see the 1846 edition).

'A Berkleyan,' i.e. a follower of Bishop Berkeley (1685-1753), who in his *New Theory of Vision* and later works maintained that 'what we call matter has no actual existence, and that the impressions which we believe ourselves to receive from it are not, in fact, derived from anything external to ourselves, but are produced within us by a certain disposition of the mind, the immediate operation of God' (Benham's *Dictionary of Religion*).

Coleridge when sending Southey one version of his poem to Charles Lamb, entitled *This Lime-tree Bower my Prison* (to which we shall come later), in July 1797, appended to the following passage the note, 'You remember I am a *Berkleian*':

Struck with joy's deepest calm, and gazing round
On the wide view, may gaze till all doth seem
Less gross than bodily; a living thing
That acts upon the mind, and with such hues
As clothe the Almighty Spirit, when He makes
Spirits perceive His presence!

'A necessarian.' We should now say a fatalist.

Coleridge's work on the *Evidences of Natural and Revealed Religion*, which has before been mentioned, was, if ever begun, never completed.

David Hartley. 'Ecquid in antiquam virtutem?'

This is a truncated quotation from Virgil, *Æneid*, iii. 342-3:

Ecquid in antiquam virtutem animosque viriles
Et pater Æneas et avunculus excitat Hector?

'Is he kindled at all to the valour of old days and the prowess of manhood by a father like Æneas, an uncle like Hector?'

21. TO S. T. COLERIDGE

DEAR COL,

[Dated at end: *16th January 1797.*]

You have learned by this time, with surprise, no doubt, that Lloyd is with me in town. The emotions I felt on his coming so unlooked for are not ill expressed in what follows, & what, if you do not object to them as too personal, & to the world obscure, or otherwise wanting in worth, I should wish to make a part of our little volume.

I shall be sorry if that vol comes out, as it necessarily must do, unless you print those very schoolboyish verses I sent you on not getting leave to come down to Bristol last Summer. I say I shall be sorry that I have addressed you in nothing which can appear in our joint volume.

So frequently, so habitually as you dwell on my thoughts, 'tis some wonder those thoughts came never yet in Contact with a poetical mood—But you dwell in my heart of hearts, and I love you in all the naked honesty of prose. God bless you, and all your little domestic circle—my tenderest remembrances to your Beloved Sara, & a smile and a kiss from me to your dear dear little David Hartley—The verses I refer to above, slightly amended, I have sent (forgetting to ask your leave, tho' indeed I gave them only your initials) to the *Month: Mag:* where they may possibly appear next month, and where I hope to recognise your Poem on Burns.

TO CHARLES LLOYD, AN UNEXPECTED VISITOR

Alone, obscure, without a friend,
A cheerless, solitary thing,
Why seeks my Lloyd the stranger out?
What offering can the stranger bring

Of social scenes, home-bred delights,
That him in aught compensate may
For Stowey's pleasant winter nights,
For loves & friendships far away?

In brief oblivion to forego
Friends, such as thine, so justly dear,

And be awhile with me content
To stay, a kindly loiterer, here—

For this a gleam of random joy,
Hath flush'd my unaccustom'd cheek,
And, with an o'er-charg'd bursting heart,
I feel the thanks, I cannot speak.

O! sweet are all the Muses' lays,
And sweet the charm of matin bird—
'Twas long, since these estranged ears
The sweeter voice of friend had heard.

The voice hath spoke: the pleasant sounds
In memory's ear, in after time
Shall live, to sometimes rouse a tear,
And sometimes prompt an honest rhyme.

For when the transient charm is fled,
And when the little week is o'er,
To cheerless, friendless solitude
When I return, as heretofore—

Long, long, within my aching heart,
The grateful sense shall cherished be;
I'll think less meanly of myself,
That Lloyd will sometimes think on me.

1797.

O Col: would to God you were in London with us, or we two at Stowey with you all. Lloyd takes up his abode at the Bull & Mouth Inn,—the Cat & Salutation would have had a charm more forcible for me. *O noctes canaque Deum!* Anglice—Welch rabbits, punch, & poesy.

Should you be induced to publish those very schoolboyish verses, print 'em as they will occur, if at all, in the Month: Mag: yet I should feel ashamed that to you I wrote nothing better. But they are too personal, & almost trifling and obscure withal. Some lines of mine to Cowper were in last Month: Mag: they have not body of thought enough to plead for the retaining of 'em.

My sister's kind love to you all.

C. LAMB.

[The verses to Lloyd were included in Coleridge's 1797 volume; but the verses concerning the frustrated Bristol holiday were omitted. Concerning this visit to London Charles Lloyd wrote to his brother Robert: 'I left Charles Lamb very warmly interested in his favour, and have kept up a regular correspondence with him ever since; he is a most interesting young man.' Only two letters from Lamb to Charles Lloyd have survived.

'We two'—Lamb and Lloyd. Not Lamb and his sister.]

22. TO S. T. COLERIDGE

[*Begun Sunday, 5th February 1797.*

Addressed by another hand.]

Sunday morning.—You cannot surely mean to degrade the Joan of Arc into a pot girl. You are not going, I hope, to annex to that most splendid ornament of Southey's poem all this cock and a bull story of Joan the publican's daughter of Neufchatel, with the lamentable episode of a waggoner, his wife, and six children; the texture will be most lamentably disproportionate. The first forty or fifty lines of these addenda are, no doubt, in their way, admirable, too; but many would prefer the Joan of Southey.

'On mightiest deeds to brood Of shadowy vastness, such as made my heart Throb fast. Anon I paused, and in a state Of half expectance listen'd to the wind;' 'They wonder'd at me, who had known me once A chearful careless damsel;' 'The eye, That of the circling throng and of the visible world Unseeing, saw the shapes of holy phantasy;' I see nothing in your description of the Maid equal to these. There is a fine originality certainly in those lines—'For she had lived in this bad world as in a place of tombs, And touch'd not the pollutions of the Dead'—but your 'fierce vivacity' is a faint copy of the 'fierce & terrible benevolence' of Southey. Added to this, that it will look like rivalry in you, & extort a comparison with S,—I think to your disadvantage. And the lines, consider'd in themselves as an addition to what you had before written (strains of a far higher mood), are but such as Madame Fancy loves in some of her more familiar moods, at such times as she has met Noll Goldsmith, & walk'd and talk'd with him, calling him old acquaintance. Southey certainly has no pretensions to vie with you in the

sublime of poetry; but he tells a plain tale better than you. I will enumerate some woeful blemishes, some of 'em sad deviations from that simplicity which was your aim. 'Hail'd who might be near' (the canvas-coverture moving, by the by, is laughable); 'a woman & six children' (by the way,—why not nine children, it would have been just half as pathetic again): 'statues of sleep they seem'd.' 'Frost-mangled wretch:' 'green putridity:' 'hail'd him immortal' (rather ludicrous again): 'voiced a sad and simple tale' (abominable!): 'unprovender'd:' 'such his tale:' 'Ah! suffering to the height of what was suffer'd' (a most *insufferable line*): 'amazements of affright:' 'the hot sore brain attributes its own hues of ghastliness and torture' (what shocking confusion of ideas!) In these delineations of common & natural feelings, in the familiar walks of poetry, you seem to resemble Montauban dancing with Roubigné's tenants, 'much of his native loftiness remained in the execution.' I was reading your Religious Musings the other day, & sincerely I think it the noblest poem in the language, next after the Paradise lost; & even that was not made the vehicle of such grand truths. 'There is one mind,' &c., down to 'Almighty's Throne,' are without a rival in the whole compass of my poetical reading. 'Stands in the sun, & with no partial gaze Views all creation'—I wish I could have written those lines. I rejoyce that I am able to relish them. The loftier walks of Pindus are your proper region. There you have no compeer in modern times. Leave the lowlands, unenvied, in possession of such men as Cowper & Southey. Thus am I pouring balsam into the wounds I may have been inflicting on my poor friend's vanity. In your notice of Southey's new volume you omit to mention the most pleasing of all, the Miniature 'There were Who form'd high hopes and flattering ones of thee, Young Robert. Spirit of Spenser!—was the wanderer wrong?' Fairfax I have been in quest of a long time. Johnson in his life of Waller gives a most delicious specimen of him, & adds, in the true manner of that delicate critic, as well as amiable man, 'it may be presumed that this old version will not be much read after the elegant translation of my friend, Mr. Hoole.' I endeavour'd—I wish'd to gain some idea of Tasso from this Mr. Hoole, the great boast and ornament of the India House, but soon desisted. I found him more vapid than smallest small

beer sun-vinegared. Your dream, down to that exquisite line—'I can't tell half his adventures,' is a most happy resemblance of Chaucer. The remainder is so so. The best line, I think, is, 'He belong'd, I believe, to the witch Melancholy.' By the way, when will our volume come out? Don't delay it till you have written a new Joan of Arc. Send what letters you please by me, & in any way you choose, single or double. The India Co. is better adapted to answer the cost than the generality of my friend's correspondents,—such poor & honest dogs as John Thelwall, particularly. I cannot say I know Colson, at least intimately. I once supped with him & Allen. I think his manners very pleasing. I will not tell you what I think of Lloyd, for he may by chance come to see this letter, and that thought puts a restraint on me. I cannot think what subject would suit your epic genius; some philosophical subject, I conjecture, in which shall be blended the Sublime of Poetry & of Science. Your proposed Hymns will be a fit preparatory study wherewith 'to discipline your young novice soul.' I grow dull; I'll go walk myself out of my dulness.

Sunday Night.—You & Sara are very good to think so kindly & so favourably of poor Mary. I would to God all did so too. But I very much fear she must not think of coming home in my father's lifetime. It is very hard upon her. But our circumstances are peculiar, & we must submit to them. God be praised she is so well as she is. She bears her situation as one who has no right to complain. My poor old aunt, whom you have seen, the kindest, goodest creature to me when I was at school; who used to toddle there to bring me fag, when I, school-boy like, only despised her for it, & used to be ashamed to see her come & sit herself down on the old coal hole steps as you went into the old grammar school, & open her apron & bring out her bason, with some nice thing she had caused to be saved for me—the good old creature is now lying on her death bed. I cannot bear to think on her deplorable state. To the shock she received on that our evil day, from which she never completely recovered, I impute her illness. She says, poor thing, she is glad she is come home to die with me. I was always her favourite: 'No after friendship e'er can raise The endearments of our early days, Nor e'er the heart such fondness prove, As when it first began to love.' Lloyd

has kindly left me for a keep-sake, John Woolman. You have read it, he says, & like it. Will you excuse one short extract? I think it could not have escaped you:—‘Small treasure to a resigned mind is sufficient. How happy is it to be content with a little, to live in humility, & feel that in us which breathes out this language—Abba! Father!’—I am almost ashamed to patch up a letter in this miscellaneous sort; but I please myself in the thought, that anything from me will be acceptable to you. I am rather impatient, childishly so, to see our names affixed to the same common volume. Send me two, when it does come out; 2 will be enough—or indeed 1—but 2 better. I have a dim recollection that, when in town, you were talking of the Origin of Evil as a most prolific subject for a long poem. Why not adopt it, Coleridge? there would be room for imagination. Or the description (from a Vision or Dream, suppose) of an Utopia in one of the planets (the Moon, for instance). Or a Five Days’ Dream, which shall illustrate, in sensible imagery, Hartley’s 5 motives to conduct:—sensation,¹ imagination,² ambition,³ sympathy,⁴ Theopathy.⁵ 1st banquets, music, etc., effeminacy, —and their insufficiency. 2d ‘beds of hyacinth & roses, where young Adonis oft reposes;’ ‘fortunate Isles;’ ‘The pagan Elysium,’ &c., &c.; poetical pictures; antiquity as pleasing to the fancy;—their emptiness, madness, etc. 3d warriors, poets; some famous, yet more forgotten, their fame or oblivion now alike indifferent, pride, vanity, &c. 4th all manner of pitiable stories, in Spenser-like verse—love—friendship, relationship, &c. 5th Hermits—Christ and his apostles—martyrs—heaven—&c., &c. An imagination like yours, from these scanty hints, may expand into a thousand great Ideas—if indeed you at all comprehend my scheme, which I scarce do myself.

Monday Morn.—‘A London letter. 9½.’ Look you, master poet, I have remorse as well as another man, & my bowels can sound upon occasion. But I must put you to this charge, for I cannot keep back my protest, however ineffectual, against the annexing your latter lines to those former—this putting of new wine into old bottles. This my duty done, I will cease from writing till you invent some more reasonable mode of conveyance. Well may the ‘ragged followers of the nine’ set up for flocci-

nauci-what-do-you-call-'em-ists! And I do not wonder that in their splendid visions of Utopias in America they protest against the admission of those *yellow-complexioned, copper-color'd, white-liver'd* Gentlemen, who never proved themselves *their* friends. Don't you think your verses on a Young Ass too trivial a companion for the Religious Musings? 'Scoundrel monarch,' alter that; and the Man of Ross is scarce admissible as it now stands curtailed of its fairer half: reclaim its property from the Chatterton, which it does but encumber, & it will be a rich little poem. I hope you expunge great part of the old notes in the new edition. That, in particular, most barefaced unfounded impudent assertion, that Mr. Rogers is indebted for his story to Loch Lomond, a poem by Bruce! I have read the latter. I scarce think you have. Scarce anything is common to them both. The poor author of the Pleasures of Memory was sorely hurt, Dyer says, by the accusation of unoriginality. He never saw the Poem. I long to read your Poem on Burns; I retain so indistinct a memory of it. In what shape and how does it come into public? As you leave off writing poetry till you finish your Hymns, I suppose you print now all you have got by you. You have scarce enough unprinted to make a 2d volume with Lloyd. Tell me all about it. What is become of Cowper? Lloyd told me of some verses on his mother. If you have them by you, pray send 'em me. I do so love him! Never mind their merit. May be I may like 'em—as your taste and mine do not always exactly *indentify*. Yours,

LAMB.

[Coleridge intended to print in his new edition the lines that he had contributed to Southey's *Joan of Arc*, 1796, with certain additions, under the title *The Progress of Liberty*; or, *The Visions of the Maid of Orleans*. Writing to Cottle, Coleridge had said: 'I much wish to send *My Visions of the Maid of Arc* and my corrections to Wordsworth . . . and to Lamb, whose taste and judgment I see reason to think more correct and philosophical than my own, which yet I place pretty high.' Lamb's criticisms are contained in this letter. Coleridge abandoned his idea of including the poem in the 1797 edition, and the lines were not separately published until 1817, in *Sibylline Leaves*, under the title *The Destiny of Nations*.

'Montauban . . . Roubigné.' An illustration from Henry Mackenzie's novel *Julia de Roubigné*, 1777, from which Lamb took hints, a little later, for the structure of part of his story *Rosamund Gray*.

This is the passage in *Religious Musings* that Lamb particularly praises:

There is one Mind, one omnipresent Mind,
Omnific. His most holy name is Love.
Truth of subliming import! with the which
Who feeds and saturates his constant soul,
He from his small particular orbit flies
With blest outstarting! From himself he flies,
Stands in the sun, and with no partial gaze
Views all creation; and he loves it all,
And blesses it, and calls it very good!
This is indeed to dwell with the Most High!
Cherubs and rapture-trembling Seraphim
Can press no nearer to the Almighty's throne.

Southey's new volume, which Coleridge had noticed, was his *Poems*, second edition, vol. i, 1797. The poem in question was *On My Own Miniature Picture taken at Two Years of Age*.

Edward Fairfax's *Tasso* (*Godfrey of Bulloigne, or the Recoverie of Jerusalem*) was published in 1600. John Hoole, a later translator, became principal auditor at the India House, and resigned in 1786. He died in 1803.

Coleridge's dream was the poem called *The Raven*.

Citizen John Thelwall (1764-1834), to whom many of Coleridge's early letters are written, was a Jacobin enthusiast who had gone to the Tower with Thomas Hardy and Horne Tooke in 1794, but was acquitted at his trial. At this time he was writing and lecturing on political subjects. When, in 1818, Thelwall acquired the *Champion*, Lamb wrote squibs for it against the Regent and others.

Colson was perhaps Thomas Coulson, a friend of Sir Humphry Davy and the father of Walter Coulson who was called 'The Walking Encyclopædia,' and was afterwards a friend of Hazlitt.

'To discipline your young noviciate soul.' A line from *Religious Musings*, 1796:

I discipline my young noviciate thought.

'My poor old aunt.' Lamb's lines on his Aunt Hetty repeat some of this praise; as also does the *Elia* essay on 'Christ's Hospital.'

John Woolman (1720-72), an American Quaker. His *Works* comprise *A Journal of the Life, Gospel, Labours, and Christian Experiences of that Faithful Minister of Jesus Christ, John Woolman, and His Last Epistle and other Writings*. Lamb often praised the book.

'My bowels can sound.' An allusion to Coleridge's motto to the second number of the *Watchman* which, he records, lost him 500 subscribers: 'A censurable application of a text' from Isaiah xvi 11: 'Wherefore my bowels shall sound like an harp for Moab, and mine inward parts for Kir-haresh.'

'Flocci.' See note on page 11.

The Young Ass, early versions, ended thus:

Soothe to rest

The tumult of some Scoundrel Monarch's breast.

Coleridge changed the last line to:

The aching of pale Fashion's vacant breast.

Coleridge had asserted, in a 1796 note, that Rogers had taken the story of Florio in the *Pleasures of Memory* from Michael Bruce's *Loch Leven* (not *Loch Lomond*). In the 1797 edition another note made apology for the mistake.

Cowper's *Lines on the Receipt of my Mother's Picture out of Norfolk* had been written in the spring of 1790. It is interesting to find Lamb reading them just now, for his own *Blank Verse* poems, shortly to be written, have much in common with Cowper's verses, not only in manner but in matter.]

23. TO S. T. COLERIDGE

Feb. 13th, 1797.

Your poem is altogether admirable—parts of it are even exquisite—in particular your personal account of the Maid far surpasses any thing of the sort in Southey. I perceived all its excellences, on a first reading, as readily as now you have been removing a supposed film from my eyes. I was only struck with [a] certain faulty disproportion in the matter and the *style*, which I still think I perceive, between these lines and the former ones. I had an end in view; I wished to make you reject the poem, only as being discordant with the other; and, in subservience to that end, it was politically done in me to over-pass, and make no mention of merit which, could you think me capable of *overlooking*, might reasonably damn for ever in your judgment all pretensions in me to be critical. There, I will be judged by Lloyd, whether I have not made a very handsome recantation. I was in the case of a man whose friend has asked him his opinion of a certain young lady; the deluded wight gives judgment against her *in toto*—don't like her face, her walk, her manners—finds fault with her eyebrows—can see no wit in her. His friend looks blank; he begins to smell a rat; wind veers about; he acknowledges her good sense, her judgment in dress, a certain simplicity of manners and honesty of heart, something too in her manners which gains upon you after a short acquaintance,—and then her accurate pronunciation of the French language and a pretty uncultivated taste in drawing. The reconciled gentleman smiles applause, squeezes him by the hand, and hopes he will do him the honour of taking a

bit of dinner with Mrs. — and him—a plain family dinner—some day next week. ‘For, I suppose, you never heard we were married! I’m glad to see you like my wife, however; you’ll come and see her, ha?’ Now am I too proud to retract entirely. Yet I do perceive I am in some sort straitened; you are manifestly wedded to this poem, and what fancy has joined let no man separate. I turn me to the Joan of Arc, second book.

The solemn openings of it are with sounds which, Lloyd would say, ‘are silence to the mind.’ The deep preluding strains are fitted to initiate the mind, with a pleasing awe, into the sublimest mysteries of theory concerning man’s nature and his noblest destination—the philosophy of a first cause—of subordinate agents in creation superior to man—the subserviency of Pagan worship and Pagan faith to the introduction of a purer and more perfect religion, which you so elegantly describe as winning with gradual steps her difficult way northward from Bethabara. After all this cometh Joan, a *publican’s* daughter, sitting on an ale-house *bench*, and marking the *swingings* of the *signboard*, finding a poor man, his wife and six children, starved to death with cold, and thence roused into a state of mind proper to receive visions emblematical of equality; which what the devil Joan had to do with, I don’t know, or indeed with the French and American revolutions; though that needs no pardon, it is executed so nobly. After all, if you perceive no disproportion, all argument is vain: I do not so much object to parts. Again, when you talk of building your fame on these lines in preference to the ‘Religious Musings,’ I cannot help conceiving of you and of the author of that as two different persons, and I think you a very vain man.

I have been re-reading your letter. Much of it I *could* dispute; but with the latter part of it, in which you compare the two Joans with respect to their predispositions for fanaticism, I *toto corde* coincide; only I think that Southey’s strength rather lies in the description of the emotions of the Maid under the weight of inspiration,—these (I see no mighty difference between *her* describing them or *you* describing them), these if you only equal, the previous admirers of his poem, as is natural, will prefer his; if you surpass, prejudice will scarcely allow it, and I scarce think you will surpass, though your specimen at the conclusion (I am in earnest) I think very high equals them. And in an account of

a fanatic or of a prophet the description of her *emotions* is expected to be most highly finished. By the way, I spoke far too disparagingly of your lines, and, I am ashamed to say, purposely. I should like you to specify or particularise; the story of the 'Tottering Eld,' of 'his eventful years all come and gone,' is too general; why not make him a soldier, or some character, however, in which he has been witness to frequency of 'cruel wrong and strange distress!' I think I should. When I laughed at the 'miserable man crawling from beneath the coverture,' I wonder I did not perceive it was a laugh of horror—such as I have laughed at Dante's picture of the famished Ugolino. Without falsehood, I perceive an hundred beauties in your narrative. Yet I wonder you do not perceive something out-of-the-way, something unsimple and artificial, in the expression, 'voiced a sad tale.' I hate made-dishes at the muses' banquet. I believe I was wrong in most of my other objections. But surely 'hailed him immortal,' adds nothing to the terror of the man's death, which it was your business to heighten, not diminish by a phrase which takes away all terror from it. I like that line, 'They closed their eyes in sleep, nor knew 'twas death.' Indeed, there is scarce a line I do not like. '*Turbid ecstasy*,' is surely not so good as what you *had* written, '*troubulous*.' Turbid rather suits the muddy kind of inspiration which London porter confers. The versification is, throughout, to my ears unexceptionable, with no disparagement to the measure of the '*Religious Musings*,' which is exactly fitted to the thoughts.

You were building your house on a rock, when you rested your fame on that poem. I can scarce bring myself to believe, that I am admitted to a familiar correspondence, and all the licence of friendship, with a man who writes blank verse like Milton. Now, this is delicate flattery, *indirect* flattery. Go on with your 'Maid of Orleans,' and be content to be second to yourself. I shall become a convert to it, when 'tis finished.

This afternoon I attend the funeral of my poor old aunt, who died on Thursday. I own I am thankful that the good creature has ended all her days of suffering and infirmity. She was to me the 'cherisher of infancy,' and one must fall on these occasions into reflections which it would be commonplace to enumerate, concerning death, 'of chance and change, and fate in human life.'

Good God, who could have foreseen all this but four months back! I had reckoned, in particular, on my aunt's living many years; she was a very hearty old woman. But she was a mere skeleton before she died, looked more like a corpse that had lain weeks in the grave, than one fresh dead. 'Truly the light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun; but let a man live many days and rejoice in them all, yet let him remember the days of darkness, for they shall be many.' Coleridge, why are we to live on after all the strength and beauty of existence are gone, when all the life of life is fled, as poor Burns expresses it? Tell Lloyd I have had thoughts of turning Quaker, and have been reading, or am rather just beginning to read, a most capital book, good thoughts in good language, William Penn's 'No Cross, no Crown;' I like it immensely. Unluckily I went to one of his meetings, tell him, in St. John Street, yesterday, and saw a man under all the agitations and workings of a fanatic, who believed himself under the influence of some 'inevitable presence.' This cured me of Quakerism; I love it in the books of Penn and Woolman, but I detest the vanity of a man thinking he speaks by the Spirit, when what he says an ordinary man might say without all that quaking and trembling. In the midst of his inspiration—and the effects of it were most noisy—was handed into the midst of the meeting a most terrible blackguard Wapping sailor; the poor man, I believe, had rather have been in the hottest part of an engagement, for the congregation of broad-brims, together with the ravings of the prophet, were too much for his gravity, though I saw even he had delicacy enough not to laugh out. And the inspired gentleman, though his manner was so supernatural, yet neither talked nor professed to talk anything more than good sober sense, common morality, with now and then a declaration of not speaking from himself. Among other things, looking back to his childhood and early youth, he told the meeting what a graceless young dog he had been, that in his youth he had a good share of wit: reader, if thou hadst seen the gentleman, thou wouldst have sworn that it must indeed have been many years ago, for his rueful physiognomy would have scared away the playful goddess from the meeting, where he presided, for ever. A wit! a wit! what could he mean? Lloyd, it minded me of Falkland in the 'Rivals,' 'Am I full of wit and

humour? No, indeed you are not. Am I the life and soul of every company I come into? No, it cannot be said you are.' That hard-faced gentleman, a wit! Why, Nature wrote on his fanatic forehead fifty years ago, 'Wit never comes, that comes to all.' I should be as scandalised at a *bon mot* issuing from his oracle-looking mouth, as to see Cato go down a country-dance. God love you all. You are very good to submit to be pleased with reading my nothings. 'Tis the privilege of friendship to talk nonsense, and to have her nonsense respected.—Yours ever,
C. LAMB.

[Lamb's Aunt Hetty, Sarah Lamb, was buried at St. Andrew's, Holborn, on 13th February 1797. Henceforward for a while Lamb and his father would be living alone together. The maidservant probably remained.

'As poor Burns expresses it.' In the *Lament for James, Earl of Glencairn*, sixth stanza:

In weary being now I pine,
For a' the life of life is dead,
And hope has left my aged ken,
On forward wing for ever fled.

'Turning Quaker.' Lamb refers to the Peel meeting-house in John Street, Clerkenwell. Lamb afterwards used the story of the wit in the *Elia* essay 'A Quakers' Meeting.'

Faulkland is in Sheridan's comedy *The Rivals* (see Act II, Scene i).

The next letter is particularly interesting for its news of Mary Lamb.]

24. TO S. T. COLERIDGE

April 7th, 1797.

Your last letter was dated the 10th February; in it you promised to write again the next day. At least, I did not expect so long, so unfriend-like, a silence. There was a time, Col., when a remissness of this sort in a dear friend would have lain very heavy on my mind, but latterly I have been too familiar with neglect to feel much from the semblance of it. Yet, to suspect one's self overlooked and in the way to oblivion, is a feeling rather humbling; perhaps, as tending to self-mortification, not unfavourable to the spiritual state. Still, as you meant to confer no benefit on the soul of your friend, you do not stand quite clear from the imputation of unkindliness (a word by which I mean the diminutive

of unkindness). Lloyd tells me he has been very ill, and was on the point of leaving you. I addressed a letter to him at Birmingham: perhaps he got it not, and is still with you. I hope his ill-health has not prevented his attending to a request I made in it, that he would write again very soon to let me know how he was. I hope to God poor Lloyd is not very bad, or in a very bad way. Pray satisfy me about these things. And then David Hartley was unwell; and how is the small philosopher, the minute philosopher? and David's mother? Coleridge, I am not trifling, nor are these matter-of-fact [? course] questions only. You are all very dear and precious to me; do what you will, Col., you may hurt me and vex me by your silence, but you cannot estrange my heart from you all. I cannot scatter friendship[s] like chuck-farthings, nor let them drop from mine hand like hour-glass sand. I have but two or three people in the world to whom I am more than indifferent, and I can't afford to whistle them off to the winds.

By the way, Lloyd may have told you about my sister. I told him. If not, I have taken her out of her confinement, and taken a room for her at Hackney, and spend my Sundays, holidays, &c., with her. She boards herself. In one little half year's illness, and in such an illness of such a nature and of such consequences! to get her out into the world again, with a prospect of her never being so ill again—this is to be ranked not among the common blessings of Providence. May that merciful God make tender my heart, and make me as thankful, as in my distress I was earnest, in my prayers. Congratulate me on an ever-present and never-alienable friend like her. And do, do insert, if you have not *lost*, my dedication. It will have lost half its value by coming so late. If you really are going on with that volume, I shall be enabled in a day or two to send you a short poem to insert. Now, do answer this. Friendship, and acts of friendship, should be reciprocal, and free as the air; a friend should never be reduced to beg an alms of his fellow. Yet I will beg an alms; I entreat you to write, and tell me all about poor Lloyd, and all of you. God love and preserve you all.

C. LAMB.

[Lloyd's domestication with Coleridge had been intermittent. It began in September 1796; in November Lloyd was very ill; in December Coleridge

told Mr. Lloyd that he would retain his son no longer as pupil but merely as a lodger and friend; at Christmas Charles Lloyd was at Birmingham; in January he was in London; in March he was ill again and his experiment with Coleridge ended.

'The minute philosopher.' A joking reference to Bishop Berkeley's *Alciphron*; or, *The Minute Philosopher*.

For the dedication to which Lamb refers, see page 58.

Lloyd, who had been at Bath and had left in defiance of Southey's wishes, wrote to Southey from London on 4th April 1797: 'I have *here* created a sort of settled dependance upon myself for the happiness of one or two individuals—there are no beings in Bath so forlorn as Lamb, nor none to whom I can be of so much moral service as White.'

He adds: 'Coleridge has written a very odd letter to Lamb. I don't know what may be his sentiments with regard to our conduct, but I can perceive that he is bent on dissociating himself from us—particularly Lamb I think he has used unkindly.' At the end is a reference to Lloyd's novel, *Edmund Oliver*, from which so much trouble was to come, then in proof.

Mary Lamb would have to live apart, I assume, because of her father, who was steadily declining.]

25. TO S. T. COLERIDGE

April 15th, 1797.

A VISION OF REPENTANCE

I saw a famous fountain in my dream,
Where shady pathways to a valley led;
A weeping willow lay upon that stream,
And all around the fountain brink were spread
Wide branching trees, with dark green leaf rich clad,
Forming a doubtful twilight desolate and sad.

The place was such, that whoso enter'd in
Disrobed was of every earthly thought,
And straight became as one that knew not sin,
Or to the world's first innocence was brought;
Enseem'd it now, he stood on holy ground,
In sweet and tender melancholy wrapt around.

A most strange calm stole o'er my soothed sprite;
Long time I stood, and longer had I staid,
When lo! I saw, saw by the sweet moonlight,
Which came in silence o'er that silent shade,
Where near the fountain SOMETHING like DESPAIR
Made of that weeping willow garlands for her hair.

And eke with painful fingers she inwove
 Many an uncouth stem of savage thorn—
 'The willow garland, *that* was for her Love,
 And *these* her bleeding temples would adorn.'
 With sighs her heart nigh burst—salt tears fast fell,
 As mournfully she bended o'er that sacred well.

To whom when I address myself to speak,
 She lifted up her eyes, and nothing said;
 The delicate red came mantling o'er her cheek,
 And gathering up her loose attire, she fled
 To the dark covert of that woody shade
 And in her goings seem'd a timid gentle maid.

Revolving in my mind what this should mean,
 And why that lovely Lady plained so;
 Perplex'd in thought at that mysterious scene,
 And doubting if 'twere best to stay or go,
 I cast mine eyes in wistful gaze around,
 When from the shades came slow a small and plaintive sound;

'PSYCHE am I, who love to dwell
 In these brown shades, this woody dell,
 Where never busy mortal came,
 Till now, to pry upon my shame.

'At thy feet what thou dost see
 The Waters of Repentance be,
 Which, night and day, I must augment
 With tears, like a true penitent,
 If haply so my day of grace
 Be not yet past; and this lone place,
 O'er-shadowy, dark, excludeth hence
 All thoughts but grief and penitence.'

'*Why dost thou weep, thou gentle maid !
 And wherefore in this barren shade
 Thy hidden thoughts with sorrow feed ?
 Can thing so fair repentance need ?*

'O ! I have done a deed of shame,
 And tainted is my virgin fame,
 And stain'd the beauteous maiden white
 In which my bridal robes were dight.'

'*And who the promis'd spouse declare,
 And what those bridal garments were ?*

'Severe and saintly righteousness
 Compos'd the clear white bridal dress;
 JESUS, the son of Heaven's high King
 Bought with his blood the marriage ring.

'A wretched sinful creature, I
 Deem'd lightly of that sacred tye,
 Gave to a treacherous WORLD my heart,
 And play'd the foolish wanton's part.

'Soon to these murky shades I came
 To hide from the Sun's light my shame—
 And still I haunt this woody dell,
 And bathe me in that healing well,
 Whose waters clear have influence
 From sin's foul stains the soul to cleanse;
 And night and day I them augment
 With tears, like a true Penitent,
 Until, due expiation made,
 And fit atonement fully paid,
 The Lord and Bridegroom me present
 Where in sweet strains of high consent,
 God's throne before, the Seraphim
 Shall chaunt the extatic marriage hymn.'

'Now *Christ restore thee soon*'—I said,
 And thenceforth all my dream was fled.

The above you will please to print immediately before the blank verse fragments.' Tell me if you like it. I fear the latter half is unequal to the former, in parts of which I think you will discover a delicacy of pencilling not quite un-Spenser-like. The latter half aims at the *measure*, but has failed to attain the *poetry*, of Milton in his 'Comus' and Fletcher in that exquisite thing ycleped the 'Faithful Shepherdess,' where they both use eight-syllable lines. But this latter half was finished in great haste, and as a task, not from that impulse which affects the name of inspiration.

By the way, I have lit upon Fairfax's 'Godfrey of Bullen' for half-a-crown. Rejoice with me.

Poor dear Lloyd! I had a letter from him yesterday; his state of mind is truly alarming. He has, by his own confession, kept a letter of mine unopened three weeks, afraid, he says, to open it, lest I should speak upbraidingly to him; and yet this very

letter of mine was in answer to one, wherein he informed me that an alarming illness had alone prevented him from writing. You will pray with me, I know, for his recovery; for surely, Coleridge, an exquisiteness of feeling like this must border on derangement. But I love him more and more, and will not give up the hope of his speedy recovery, as he tells me he is under Dr. Darwin's regimen.

God bless us all, and shield us from insanity, which is 'the sorest malady of all.'

My kind love to your wife and child.

C. LAMB.

Pray write, now.

[I have placed the poem at the head from the text of Coleridge's *Poems*, 1797; but the version of the letter very likely differed (see next letter for at least one alteration).

Fairfax's *Godfrey of Bullen* was his translation of *Tasso*, which Lamb has already mentioned. See page 93.

Lloyd, who was undergoing one of those attacks of acute melancholia to which he was subject all his life, had been sent to Lichfield, where Erasmus Darwin had established a sanatorium.

'The sorest malady of all.' From Lamb's lines to Cowper.]

26. TO S. T. COLERIDGE

June 13th, 1797.

I stared with wild wonderment to see thy well-known hand again. It revived many a pleasing recollection of an epistolary intercourse, of late strangely suspended, once the pride of my life. Before I even opened thy letter, I figured to myself a sort of complacency which my little hoard at home would feel at receiving the new-comer into the little drawer where I keep my treasures of this kind. You have done well in writing to me. The little room (was it not a little one?) at the Salutation was already in the way of becoming a fading idea! it had begun to be classed in my memory with those 'wanderings with a fair hair'd maid,' in the recollection of which I feel I have no property. You press me, very kindly do you press me, to come to Stowey; obstacles, strong as death, prevent me at present; maybe I shall be able to

come before the year is out; believe me, I will come as soon as I can, but I dread naming a probable time. It depends on fifty things, besides the expense, which is not nothing. Lloyd wants me to come and see him; but, besides that you have a prior claim on me, I should not feel myself so much at home with him, till he gets a house of his own. As to Richardson, caprice may grant what caprice only refused, and it is no more hardship, rightly considered, to be dependent on him for pleasure, than to lie at the mercy of the rain and sunshine for the enjoyment of a holiday: in either case we are not to look for a suspension of the laws of nature. 'Grill will be Grill.' Vide Spenser.

I could not but smile at the compromise you make with me for printing Lloyd's poems first; but there is [are] in nature, I fear, too many tendencies to envy and jealousy not to justify you in your apology. Yet, if any one is welcome to pre-eminence from me, it is Lloyd, for he would be the last to desire it. So pray, let his name *uniformly* precede mine, for it would be treating me like a child to suppose it could give me pain. Yet, alas! I am not insusceptible of the bad passions. Thank God, I have the ingenuousness to be ashamed of them. I am dearly fond of Charles Lloyd; he is all goodness, and I have too much of the world in my composition to feel myself thoroughly deserving of his friendship.

Lloyd tells me that Sheridan put you upon writing your tragedy. I hope you are only Coleridgeizing when you talk of finishing it in a few days. Shakspeare was a more modest man; but you best know your own power.

Of my last poem you speak slightly; surely the longer stanzas were pretty tolerable; at least there was one good line in it,

Thick-shaded trees, with dark green leaf rich clad.

To adopt your own expression, I call this a 'rich' line, a fine full line. And some others I thought even beautiful. Believe me, my little gentleman will feel some repugnance at riding behind in the basket; though, I confess, in pretty good company. Your picture of idiocy, with the sugar-loaf head, is exquisite; but are you not too severe upon our more favoured brethren in fatuity? Lloyd tells me how ill your wife and child have been. I rejoice that they are better. My kindest remembrances and those of

my sister. I send you a trifling letter; but you have only to think that I have been skimming the superficies of my mind, and found it only froth. Now, do write again; you cannot believe how I long and love always to hear about you. Yours, most affectionately,

CHARLES LAMB.

Monday Night.

['Little drawer where I keep . . .'] Lamb soon lost the habit of keeping any letters, except Manning's.

'Wanderings with a fair hair'd maid.' Lamb's own line.

Lamb's visit to Stowey was made in July, as we shall see.

'Grill will be Grill.' See the *Faerie Queene*, Book II, Canto XII, stanzas 86 and 87. 'Let Grill be Grill' is the right text.

Lloyd had joined the poetical partnership, and his poems were to precede Lamb's in the 1797 volume. 'Lloyd's connections,' Coleridge had written to Cottle, 'will take off a great many [copies], more than a hundred.'

Coleridge's tragedy was *Osorio*, of which we hear first in March 1797, when Coleridge tells Cottle that Sheridan has asked him to write a play for Drury Lane. It was finished in October, and rejected. In 1813, much altered, it was performed under its new title, *Remorse*, and published in book form. Lamb wrote the Prologue.

The 'last poem' of which Lamb speaks was *The Vision of Repentance*. The good line was altered to:

Wide branching trees, with dark green leaf rich clad,

when the poem appeared in the Appendix ('the basket,' as Lamb calls it) of the 1797 volume.

'Your picture of idiocy.' Compare S. T. Coleridge to Thomas Poole, dated 'Greta Hall, Oct. 5, 1801' (*Thomas Poole and His Friends*): 'We passed a poor ideot boy, who exactly answered my description; he

Stood in the sun, rocking his sugar-loaf head,
And staring at a bough from morn to sunset,
See-sawed his voice in inarticulate noises.'

See this passage, much altered, in *Remorse*, II. i. 186-91. The lines do not occur in *Osorio*, yet they, or something like them, must have been copied out by Coleridge for Lamb in June 1797.]

27. TO S. T. COLERIDGE

(Possibly only a fragment)

June 24th, 1797.

Did you seize the grand opportunity of seeing Kosciusko while he was at Bristol? I never saw a hero; I wonder how they look.

I have been reading a most curious romance-like work, called the 'Life of John Bunclé, Esq.' 'Tis very interesting, and an extraordinary compound of all manner of subjects, from the depth of the ludicrous to the heights of sublime religious truth. There is much abstruse science in it above my cut and an infinite fund of pleasantry. John Bunclé is a famous fine man, formed in nature's most eccentric hour. I am ashamed of what I write. But I have no topic to talk of. I see nobody, and sit, and read or walk, alone, and hear nothing. I am quite lost to conversation from disuse; and out of the sphere of my little family, who, I am thankful, are dearer and dearer to me every day, I see no face that brightens up at my approach. My friends are at a distance; worldly hopes are at a low ebb with me, and unworldly thoughts are not yet familiarised to me, though I occasionally indulge in them. Still I feel a calm not unlike content. I fear it is sometimes more akin to physical stupidity than to a heaven-flowing serenity and peace. What right have I to obtrude all this upon you? what is such a letter to you? and if I come to Stowey, what conversation can I furnish to compensate my friend for those stores of knowledge and of fancy, those delightful treasures of wisdom, which I know he will open to me? But it is better to give than to receive; and I was a very patient hearer and docile scholar in our winter evening meetings at Mr. May's; was I not, Col.? What I have owed to thee, my heart can ne'er forget.

God love you and yours.

C. L.

Saturday.

[Thaddeus Kosciuszko (1746-1817), the Polish patriot, to whom Coleridge had a sonnet in his *Poems*, 1796, visited England and America after being liberated from prison on the accession of Paul I, and settled in France in 1798. A few years later Lamb was to see Nelson in the flesh.

The Life of John Bunclé, Esq., a book which Lamb (and also Hazlitt) frequently praised, is a curious digressive novel, part religious, part roystering, and wholly eccentric and individual, by Thomas Amory, published, vol. i in 1756, and vol. ii in 1766.

'Mr. May's.' See note to the first letter.

'What I have owed to thee . . .' The words are a quotation—the last line of Bowles's sonnet *Oxford Revisited*.]

28. TO S. T. COLERIDGE

(Possibly only a fragment)

[No date: ? 29th June 1797.]

I discern a possibility of my paying you a visit next week. May I, can I, shall I, come so soon? Have you *room* for me, *leisure* for me, and are you all pretty well? Tell me all this honestly—immediately. And by what *day-coach* could I come soonest and nearest to Stowey? A few months hence may suit you better; certainly me as well. If so, say so. I long, I yearn, with all the longings of a child do I desire to see you, to come among you—to see the young philosopher, to thank Sara for her last year's invitation in person—to read your tragedy—to read over together our little book—to breathe fresh air—to revive in me vivid images of 'Salutation scenery.' There is a sort of sacrilege in my letting such ideas slip out of my mind and memory. Still that knave Richardson remaineth—a thorn in the side of Hope, when she would lean towards Stowey. Here I will leave off, for I dislike to fill up this paper, which involves a question so connected with my heart and soul, with meaner matter or subjects to me less interesting. I can talk, as I can think, nothing else.

C. LAMB.

Thursday.

['Our little book.' Coleridge's *Poems*, second edition.

'Richardson.' Lamb's superior at the East India House, who, as the next letter tells us, relented, and made the visit to Stowey possible.]

29. TO S. T. COLERIDGE

[No date: Probably 19th or 26th July 1797.]

I am scarcely yet so reconciled to the loss of you, or so subsided into my wonted uniformity of feeling, as to sit calmly down to think of you and write to you. But I reason myself into the belief that those few and pleasant holidays shall not have been spent in vain. I feel improvement in the recollection of many a

casual conversation. The names of Tom Poole, of Wordsworth and his good sister, with thine and Sara's, are become 'familiar in my mouth as household words.' You would make me very happy, if you think W. has no objection, by transcribing for me that inscription of his. I have some scattered sentences ever floating on my memory, teasing me that I cannot remember more of it. You may believe I will make no improper use of it. Believe me I can think now of many subjects on which I had planned gaining information from you; but I forgot my 'treasure's worth' while I possessed it. Your leg is now become to me a matter of much more importance—and many a little thing, which when I was present with you seemed scarce to *indent* my notice, now presses painfully on my remembrance. Is the Patriot come yet? Are Wordsworth and his sister gone yet? I was looking out for John Thelwall all the way from Bridgewater, and had I met him, I think it would have moved almost me to tears. You will oblige me too by sending me my great-coat, which I left behind in the oblivious state the mind is thrown into at parting—is it not ridiculous that I sometimes envy that great-coat lingering so cunningly behind?—at present I have none—so send it me by a Stowey waggon, if there be such a thing, directing for C. L., No. 45, Chapel-Street, Pentonville, near London. But above all, *that Inscription!*—it will recall to me the tones of all your voices—and with them many a remembered kindness to one who could and can repay you all only by the silence of a grateful heart. I could not talk much, while I was with you, but my silence was not sullenness, nor I hope from any bad motive; but, in truth, disuse has made me awkward at it. I know I behaved myself, particularly at Tom Poole's, and at Cruikshank's, most like a sulky child; but company and converse are strange to me. It was kind in you all to endure me as you did.

Are you and your dear Sara—to me also very dear, because very kind—agreed yet about the management of little Hartley? and how go on the little rogue's teeth? I will see White to-morrow, and he shall send you information on that matter; but as perhaps I can do it as well after talking with him, I will keep this letter open.

My love and thanks to you and all of you.

C. L.

Wednesday Evening.

[Lamb spent a week at Nether Stowey in July 1797. Coleridge tells Southey of this visit in a letter written in that month: 'Charles Lamb has been with me for a week. He left me Friday morning. The second day after Wordsworth [who had just left Racedown, near Crewkerne, for Alfoxden, near Stowey] came to me, dear Sara accidentally emptied a skillet of boiling milk on my foot, which confined me during the whole time of C. Lamb's stay and still prevents me from all walks longer than a furlong.' This is the cause of Lamb's allusion to Coleridge's leg, and it also produced Coleridge's poem beginning 'This lime-tree bower my prison,' addressed to Lamb, which opens as follows, the friends in the fourth line being Lamb, Wordsworth, and Dorothy Wordsworth. (Wordsworth was then twenty-seven. The *Lyrical Ballads* were to be written in the next few months.)

Well, they are gone, and here must I remain,
 Lam'd by the scathe of fire, lonely and faint,
 This lime-tree bower my prison! They meantime
 My Friends, whom I may never meet again,
 On springy heath, along the hill-top edge
 Wander delighted, and look down, perchance,
 On that same rifted Dell, where many an ash
 Twists its wild limbs beside the ferny rock
 Whose plummy ferns forever nod and drip,
 Spray'd by the waterfall. But chiefly thou
 My gentle-hearted *Charles*! thou who had pin'd
 And hunger'd after Nature many a year,
 In the great City pent, winning thy way
 With sad yet bowed soul, through evil and pain
 And strange calamity!

Tom Poole was Thomas Poole (1765-1837), a wealthy tanner, and Coleridge's friend, correspondent, and patron, who lived at Stowey.

The patriot and John Thelwall were one. See note on page 97.

'That inscription.' The *Lines left upon a Seat in a Yew Tree*, written in 1795. Lamb refers to it again in 1815.

John Cruikshank, a neighbour of Coleridge, had married a Miss Budé on the same day that Coleridge married Sara Fricker.

Of the business connected with White we know nothing.]

30. TO S. T. COLERIDGE

[P.M. 24th August 1797.]

Poor Charles Lloyd came to me about a fortnight ago. He took the opportunity of Mr. Hawkes coming to London, and I think at his request, to come with him. It seemed to me, and he

acknowledged it, that he had come to gain a little time and a little peace, before he made up his mind. He was a good deal perplexed what to do—wishing earnestly that he had never entered into engagements which he felt himself unable to fulfill, but which on Sophia's account he could not bring himself to relinquish. I could give him little advice or comfort, and feeling my own inability painfully, eagerly snatched at a proposal he made me to go to Southey's with him for a day or two. He then meant to return with me, who could stay only one night. While there, he at one time thought of going to consult you, but changed his intention and stayed behind with Southey, and wrote an explicit letter to Sophia. I came away on the Tuesday, and on the Saturday following, *last Saturday*, receiv'd a letter dated Bath, in which he said he was on his way to Birmingham,—that Southey was accompanying him,—and that he went for the purpose of persuading Sophia to a Scotch marriage—

I greatly feared, that she would never consent to this, from what Lloyd had told me of her character. But waited most anxiously the result. Since then I have not had one letter. For God's sake, if you get any intelligence of or from Chas Lloyd, communicate it, for I am much alarmed.

C. LAMB.

I wrote to Burnett what I write now to you,—was it from him you heard, or elsewhere?—

He said if he *had* come to you, he could never have brought himself to leave you. In all his distress he was sweetly and exemplarily calm and master of himself,—and seemed perfectly free from his disorder.—

How do you all at?

[This letter is unimportant, except in showing Lamb's power of sharing his friends' troubles. Charles Lloyd was not married to Sophia Pemberton, of Birmingham, until 1799; nothing rash being done, as Lamb seems to think possible. The reference to Southey, who was at this time living at Burton, in Hampshire, throws some light on De Quincey's statement, in his *Autobiography*, that owing to the objection of Miss Pemberton's parents to the match, Lloyd secured the assistance of Southey to carry the lady off. Lamb was at Burton with the two conspirators on 14th and 15th August.

Burnett was George Burnett (1776?–1811), one of Coleridge's fellow-Pantisocratists, whom we shall meet later.

The 'he' of the second postscript is not Burnett, but Lloyd.]

31. TO S. T. COLERIDGE

[About 20th September 1797.]

WRITTEN A TWELVEMONTH AFTER THE EVENTS

[Friday next, Coleridge, is the day on which my mother died.]

Alas! how am I changed! where be the tears,
 The sobs and forced suspensions of the breath,
 And all the dull desertions of the heart
 With which I hung o'er my dear mother's corse?
 Where be the blest subsidings of the storm
 Within; the sweet resignedness of hope
 Drawn heavenward, and strength of filial love,
 In which I bow'd me to my Father's will?
 My God and my Redeemer, keep not thou
 My heart in brute and sensual thanklessness
 Seal'd up, oblivious ever of that dear grace,
 And health restor'd to my long-loved friend.

Long loved, and worthy known! Thou didst not keep
 Her soul in death. O keep not now, my Lord,
 Thy servants in far worse—in spiritual death
 And darkness—blacker than those feared shadows
 O' the valley all must tread. Lend us thy balms,
 Thou dear Physician of the sin-sick soul,
 And heal our cleansed bosoms of the wounds
 With which the world hath pierc'd us thro' and thro'!
 Give us new flesh, new birth; Elect of heaven
 May we become, in thine election sure
 Contain'd, and to one purpose steadfast drawn—
 Our souls' salvation.

Thou and I, dear friend,
 With filial recognition sweet, shall know
 One day the face of our dear mother in heaven,
 And her remember'd looks of love shall greet
 With answering looks of love, her placid smiles
 Meet with a smile as placid, and her hand
 With drops of fondness wet, nor fear repulse.¹

Be witness for me, Lord, I do not ask
 Those days of vanity to return again,
 (Nor fitting me to ask, nor thee to give),
 Vain loves, and 'wanderings with a fair-hair'd maid';

¹ Note on the margin of the MS.: 'This is almost literal from a letter of my sister's—less than a year ago.'

(Child of the dust as I am), who so long
 My foolish heart steep'd in idolatry,
 And creature-loves. Forgive it, O my Maker!
 If in a mood of grief, I sin almost
 In sometimes brooding on the days long past,
 (And from the grave of time wishing them back),
 Days of a mother's fondness to her child—
 Her little one! Oh, where be now those sports
 And infant play-games? Where the joyous troops
 Of children, and the haunts I did so love?
 O my companions! O ye loved names
 Of friend, or playmate dear, gone are ye now.
 Gone divers ways; to honour and credit some:
 And some, I fear, to ignominy and shame!¹
 I only am left, with unavailing grief
 One parent dead to mourn, and see one live
 Of all life's joys bereft, and desolate:
 Am left, with a few friends, and one above
 The rest, found faithful in a length of years,
 Contented as I may, to bear me on,
 T' the not unpeaceful evening of a day
 Made black by morning storms.

The following I wrote when I had returned from C. Lloyd, leaving him behind at Burton with Southey. To understand some of it, you must remember that at that time he was very much perplexed in mind.

A stranger and alone, I past those scenes
 We past so late together; and my heart
 Felt something like desertion, as I look'd
 Around me, and the pleasant voice of friend
 Was absent, and the cordial look was there
 No more, to smile on me. I thought on Lloyd—
 All he had been to me! And now I go
 Again to mingle with a world impure;
 With men who make a mock of holy things,
 Mistaken, and of man's best hope think scorn.
 The world does much to warp the heart of man;
 And I may sometimes join its idiot laugh:
 Of this I now complain not. Deal with me,
 Omniscient Father, as Thou judgest best,
 And in *Thy* season soften thou my heart.

¹ Note in the margin: 'Alluding to some of my old playfellows being literally "on the town," and some otherwise wretched.'

I pray not for myself: I pray for him
 Whose soul is sore perplexed. Shine thou on him,
 Father of Lights! and in the difficult paths
 Make plain his way before him: his own thoughts
 May he not think—his own ends not pursue—
 So shall he best perform Thy will on earth.
 Greatest and Best, Thy will be ever ours!

The former of these poems I wrote with unusual celerity t'other morning at office. I expect you to like it better than anything of mine; Lloyd does, and I do myself.

You use Lloyd very ill, never writing to him. I tell you again that his is not a mind with which you should play tricks. He deserves more tenderness from you.

For myself, I must spoil a little passage of Beaumont and Fletcher to adapt it to my feelings:

I am prouder
 That I was once your friend, tho' now forgot,
 Than to have had another true to me.

If you don't write to me now, as I told Lloyd, I shall get angry, and call you hard names—Manchineel and I don't know what else. I wish you would send me my great-coat. The snow and the rain season is at hand, and I have but a wretched old coat, once my father's, to keep 'em off, and that is transitory.

When time drives flocks from field to fold,
 When ways grow foul and blood gets cold,

I shall remember where I left my coat. Meet emblem wilt thou be, old Winter, of a friend's neglect—cold, cold, cold! Remembrance where remembrance is due.

C. LAMB.

[The two poems included in this letter were printed in *Blank Verse*, a volume which Lamb and Lloyd issued in 1798.

That Coleridge had written to Lloyd as late as July we know, because he sent him a version of the poem *This Lime-tree Bower my Prison*; but a coolness that was to ripen into positive hostility had already begun. Of this we shall see more later.

The passage from Beaumont and Fletcher is in *The Maid's Tragedy* (Act II. Scene i), where Aspatia says to Amintor:

Thus I wind myself
 Into this willow garland, and am prouder
 That I was once your love (though now refus'd)
 Than to have had another true to me.

The scene is in Lamb's *Dramatic Specimens*.

The reference to Manchineel is explained by a passage in Coleridge's dedication of his 1797 volume, then just published, to his brother, the Rev. George Coleridge, where, speaking of the friends he had known, he says:

and some most false,
False and fair-foliag'd as the Manchineel,
Have tempted me to slumber in their shade

—the manchineel being a poisonous West Indian tree.

Between this and the next letter probably came correspondence that has now been lost. All that we know of this period is that Mary Lamb was taken ill just before Christmas, and Lamb wrote the lines beginning: 'I am a widow'd thing, now thou art gone!' But, judging by the next letter, other disasters were occurring too.]

32. TO S. T. COLERIDGE

January 28th, 1798.

You have writ me many kind letters, and I have answered none of them. I don't deserve your attentions. An unnatural indifference has been creeping on me since my last misfortunes, or I should have seized the first opening of a correspondence with you. To you I owe much under God. In my brief acquaintance with you in London, your conversations won me to the better cause, and rescued me from the polluting spirit of the world. I might have been a worthless character without you; as it is, I do possess a certain improvable portion of devotional feelings, tho' when I view myself in the light of divine truth, and not according to the common measures of human judgment, I am altogether corrupt and sinful. This is no cant. I am very sincere.

These last afflictions, Coleridge, have failed to soften and bend my will. They found me unprepared. My former calamities produced in me a spirit of humility and a spirit of prayer. I thought they had sufficiently disciplined me; but the event ought to humble me. If God's judgments now fail to take away from me the heart of stone, what more grievous trials ought I not to expect? I have been very querulous, impatient under the rod—full of little jealousies and heart-burnings.—I had well nigh quarrelled with Charles Lloyd; and for no other reason, I believe,

than that the good creature did all he could to make me happy. The truth is, I thought he tried to force my mind from its natural and proper bent; he continually wished me to be from home; he was drawing me *from* the consideration of my poor dear Mary's situation, rather than assisting me to gain a proper view of it with religious consolations. I wanted to be left to the tendency of my own mind in a solitary state which, in times past, I knew had led to quietness and a patient bearing of the yoke. He was hurt that I was not more constantly with him; but he was living with White, a man to whom I had never been accustomed to impart my *dearest feelings*, tho' from long habits of friendliness, and many a social and good quality, I loved him very much. I met company there sometimes — indiscriminate company. Any society almost, when I am in affliction, is sorely painful to me. I seem to breathe more freely, to think more collectedly, to feel more properly and calmly, when alone. All these things the good creature did with the kindest intentions in the world, but they produced in me nothing but soreness and discontent. I became, as he complained, 'jaundiced' towards him . . . but he has forgiven me—and his smile, I hope, will draw all such humours from me. I am recovering, God be praised for it, a healthiness of mind, something like calmness—but I want more religion—I am jealous of human helps and leaning-places. I rejoice in your good fortunes. May God at the last settle you!—You have had many and painful trials; humanly speaking they are going to end; but we should rather pray that discipline may attend us thro' the whole of our lives. . . . A careless and a dissolute spirit has advanced upon *me* with large strides—pray God that my present afflictions may be sanctified to me! Mary is recovering, but I see no opening yet of a situation for her; your invitation went to my very heart, but you have a power of exciting interest, of leading all hearts captive, too forcible to admit of Mary's being with you. I consider her as perpetually on the brink of madness. I think you would almost make her dance within an inch of the precipice: she must be with duller fancies and cooler intellects. I know a young man of this description, who has suited her these twenty years, and may live to do so still, if we are one day restored to each other. In answer to your suggestion of occupation for me, I must say that I do not think

my capacity altogether suited for disquisitions of that kind. . . . I have read little, I have a very weak memory, and retain little of what I read; am unused to composition in which any methodising is required; but I thank you sincerely for the hint, and shall receive it as far as I am able: that is, endeavour to engage my mind in some constant and innocent pursuit. I know my capacities better than you do.

Accept my kindest love, and believe me yours, as ever.

C. L.

[This, the first letter that has been preserved since September of the previous year, was addressed to Coleridge at the Reverend Mr. Rowe's, Shrewsbury. Coleridge had been offered the Unitarian pulpit at Shrewsbury, and was on the point of accepting when he received news of the annuity of £150 which Josiah and Thomas Wedgwood had settled upon him.

One at any rate of Lamb's new calamities was, I imagine, the increasing feebleness of his father.

In the meantime Lamb had begun to work on *Rosamund Gray*, and was also arranging to join Lloyd, who was living in London with White, in the volume of poems to be called *Blank Verse*. Southey, writing many years later to Edward Moxon, said of Lloyd and White: 'No two men could be imagined more unlike each other; Lloyd had no drollery in his nature; White seemed to have nothing else. You will easily understand how Lamb could sympathize with both.'

It was in January 1798 that Lamb wrote the poem *The Old Familiar Faces*, which I quote below in its original form, afterwards changed by the omission of the first four lines:

THE OLD FAMILIAR FACES

Where are they gone, the old familiar faces?

I had a mother, but she died, and left me,
Died prematurely in a day of horrors—
All, all are gone, the old familiar faces.

I have had playmates, I have had companions,
In my days of childhood, in my joyful school-days—
All, all are gone, the old familiar faces.

I have been laughing, I have been carousing,
Drinking late, sitting late, with my bosom cronies—
All, all are gone, the old familiar faces.

I loved a love once, fairest among women.
Closed are her doors on me, I must not see her—
All, all are gone, the old familiar faces.

I have a friend, a kinder friend has no man.
Like an ingrate, I left my friend abruptly;
Left him, to muse on the old familiar faces.

Ghost-like, I paced round the haunts of my childhood.
Earth seem'd a desert I was bound to traverse,
Seeking to find the old familiar faces.

Friend of my bosom, thou more than a brother!
Why wert not thou born in my father's dwelling?
So might we talk of the old familiar faces.

For some they have died, and some they have left me,
And some are taken from me; all are departed;
All, all are gone, the old familiar faces.

It has been conjectured that Lloyd was the friend of the fifth stanza and Coleridge the friend of the seventh. The italicized half line might refer to 'Anna,' but, since she is mentioned in the fourth stanza, it more probably, I think, refers to Mary Lamb, who, as we have seen, had been so ill as to necessitate removal from Hackney into more special confinement again.

In a copy of *Blank Verse* presented by Lamb to Marmaduke Thompson are notes in Thompson's writing, evidently transcribed from letters written to him by Lamb. Opposite *The Old Familiar Faces* is the following note: 'I spent an evening about a week ago with Lloyd. White, and a miscellaneous company was there. Lloyd had been playing on a pianoforte till my feelings were wrought too high not to require Vent. I left em suddenly & rushed into y^e Temple, where I was born, you know—& in y^e state of mind that followed [I composed these] stanzas. They pretend to little like Metre, but they will pourtray y^e Disorder I was in.'

We come now to another silent interval of several weeks, broken at last by a letter of critical importance in Lamb's life, for it marks his first quarrel with Coleridge and exhibits him for the first time as capable of the 'ungentleness' he had once claimed to possess: indeed, as an actual fighter. The cause of the alienation, which, happily, was not to last for long, was Lloyd, who seems to have been a sad busybody. In outline the story is this. Lloyd had left Coleridge in the spring of 1797; a little later, in a state of much perplexity, he had carried his troubles to Lamb, and to Southey, between whom and Coleridge no very cordial feeling had existed for some time, rather than to Coleridge himself, his late mentor. That probably fanned the flame. The next move came from Coleridge. He printed in the *Monthly Magazine* for November 1797 three sonnets signed Nehemiah Higginbottom, burlesquing instances of 'affectation of unaffectedness,' and 'puny pathos' in the poems of himself, of Lamb, and of Lloyd, the humour of which Lamb probably did not much appreciate, since he believed in the feelings expressed in his verse, while Lloyd was certainly unfitted to appreciate it. Coleridge effected even more than he had contemplated, for Southey took the sonnet upon Simplicity as an attack

upon himself; which did not, however, prevent him, a little later, from a similar exercise in ponderous humour under the too similar name of Abel Shufflebottom.

In March 1798, when a new edition of Coleridge's 1797 *Poems* was in contemplation, Lloyd wrote to Cottle, the publisher, asking that he would persuade Coleridge to omit his (Lloyd's) portion, a request which Coleridge probably resented, but which gave him the opportunity of replying that no persuasion was needed for the omission of verses published at the earnest request of the author.

Meanwhile a worse offence than all against Coleridge was perpetrated by Lloyd. In the spring of 1798 was published at Bristol his novel, *Edmund Oliver*, dedicated to Lamb, in which Coleridge's experiences in the army, under the alias of Silas Tomkyn Comberback, in 1793-4, and certain of Coleridge's peculiarities, including his drug habit, were utilized. Added to this, Lloyd seems to have repeated both to Lamb and Southey, in distorted form, certain things which Coleridge had said of them, either in confidence or, at any rate, with no wish that they should be repeated; with the result that Lamb actually went so far as to take sides with Lloyd against his older friend. The following extracts from a letter from Coleridge to Lamb carry the story a little farther:

DEAR LAMB,

[*Spring of 1798.*]

Lloyd has informed me through Miss Wordsworth that you intend no longer to correspond with me. This has given me little pain; not that I do not love and esteem you, but on the contrary because I am confident that your intentions are pure. You are performing what you deem a duty, and humanly speaking have that merit which can be derived from the performance of a painful duty. Painful, for you would not without struggles abandon me in behalf of a man [Lloyd] who, wholly ignorant of all but your name, became attached to you in consequence of my attachment, caught *his* from my enthusiasm, and learned to love you at my fireside, when often while I have been sitting and talking of your sorrows and afflictions I have stopped my conversations and lifted up wet eyes and prayed for you. No! I am confident that although you do not think as a wise man, you feel as a good man.

From you I have received little pain, because for you I suffer little alarm. I cannot say this for your friend; it appears to me evident that his feelings are vitiated, and that his ideas are in their combination merely the creatures of those feelings. I have received letters from him, and the best and kindest wish which, as a Christian, I can offer in return is that he may feel remorse. . . .

When I wrote to you that my Sonnet to Simplicity was not composed with reference to Southey, you answered me (I believe these were the words): 'It was a lie too gross for the grossest ignorance to believe'; and I was not angry with you, because the assertion which the grossest ignorance would believe a lie the Omniscient knew to be truth. This, however, makes me cautious not too hastily to affirm the falsehood of an assertion of Lloyd's that in *Edmund Oliver's* love-fit, leaving college, and going into the army he had no sort of allusion to or recollection of my love-fit, leaving college, and going into the army, and that he never thought of my person in the description

of Oliver's person in the first letter of the second volume. This cannot appear stranger to me than my assertion did to you, and therefore I will suspend my absolute faith. . . .

I have been unfortunate in my connections. Both you and Lloyd became acquainted with me when your minds were far from being in a composed or natural state, and you clothed my image with a suit of notions and feelings which could belong to nothing human. You are restored to comparative saneness, and are merely wondering what is become of the Coleridge with whom you were so passionately in love; *Charles Lloyd's* mind has only changed his disease, and he is now arraying his *ci-devant* Angel in a flaming San Benito—the whole ground of the garment a dark brimstone and plenty of little devils flourished out in black. Oh, me! Lamb, 'even in laughter the heart is sad!' . . .

God bless you and

S. T. COLERIDGE.

It was probably on the receipt of this letter that the sarcastic document which follows was drawn up. According to Joseph Cottle, who was the first to print it, in his *Early Recollections*, 1837, the date must have been in May. 'Mr. Coleridge,' wrote Cottle, 'gave me this letter, saying: "These young visionaries will do each other no good."' "

One other passage. In a letter from Lloyd at Birmingham to Cottle, dated June 1798, Lloyd says, in response to Cottle's suggestion that he should visit Coleridge: 'I love Coleridge, and can forget all that has happened. At present I could not well go to Stowey. . . . Lamb quitted me yesterday, after a fortnight's visit. I have been much interested in his society. I never knew him so happy in my life. I shall write to Coleridge to-day.' Coleridge left for Germany in September.]

33. TO S. T. COLERIDGE

[No date: May 1798.]

THESES QUÆDAM THEOLOGICÆ

1. Whether God loves a lying Angel better than a true Man?
2. Whether the Archangel Uriel *could* affirm an untruth? and if he *could* whether he *would*?
3. Whether Honesty be an angelic virtue? or not rather to be reckoned among those qualities which the Schoolmen term '*Virtutes minus splendide et terræ et hominis participes*'?
4. Whether the higher order of Seraphim Illuminati ever sneer?
5. Whether pure intelligences can love?
6. Whether the Seraphim Ardentes do not manifest their

virtues by the way of vision and theory? and whether practice be not a sub-celestial and merely human virtue?

7. Whether the Vision Beatific be anything more or less than a perpetual representment to each individual Angel of his own present attainments and future capabilities, somehow in the manner of mortal looking-glasses, reflecting a perpetual complacency and self-satisfaction?

8 and last. Whether an immortal and amenable soul may not come to be damned at last, and the man never suspect it beforehand?

Learned Sir, my Friend,

Presuming on our long habits of friendship and emboldened further by your late liberal permission to avail myself of your correspondence, in case I want any knowledge, (which I intend to do when I have no Encyclopædia or Lady's Magazine at hand to refer to in any matter of science,) I now submit to your enquiries the above Theological Propositions, to be by you defended, or oppugned, or both, in the Schools of Germany, whither I am told you are departing, to the utter dissatisfaction of your native Devonshire and regret of universal England; but to my own individual consolation if thro' the channel of your wished return, Learned Sir, my Friend, may be transmitted to this our Island, from those famous Theological Wits of Leipsic and Gottingen, any rays of illumination, in vain to be derived from the home growth of our English Halls and Colleges. Finally wishing, Learned Sir, that you may see Schiller and swing in a wood (*vide* Poems) and sit upon a Tun, and eat fat hams of Westphalia,

I remain,

Your friend and docile Pupil to instruct

CHARLES LAMB.

To S. T. Coleridge.

1798.

['Virtutes, etc.': The less shining virtues, savouring of earth and man. Not classical.]

Lamb's reading of Thomas Aquinas possibly was at the base of his theses, although Pope & Arbuthnot's *Memoirs of Martinus Scriblerus* might have helped. William Godwin, in his *History of Knowledge, Learning and Taste in Great Britain*, which had run through some years of the *New Annual Register*, cited, in 1786, a number of the more grotesque queries of the old schoolmen. The late

Kegan Paul, Godwin's biographer, suggested that Lamb went to Godwin for his examination paper; but I think this most unlikely. Possibly it was concocted while Lamb was staying with Lloyd at Birmingham between 23rd May and 6th June. Some of the questions hit Coleridge very hard.

'Schiller and swing in a wood.' An allusion to Coleridge's sonnet to Schiller:

Ah! Bard tremendous in sublimity!
 Could I behold thee in thy loftier mood
 Wand'ring at eve with finely-frenzied eye
 Beneath some vast old tempest-swinging wood!

For two years Lamb does not seem to have written again to Coleridge, and then the old relations were as nearly re-established as could be, considering that Lamb was rapidly growing older and independent. When, in 1834, Coleridge died, Lamb wrote of him that he was his 'fifty years old friend without a dissension'; while just before his death Coleridge had written in pencil, against his poem *This Lime-tree Bower my Prison* the words: 'Ch: and Mary Lamb—dear to my heart, yea, as it were my heart.'

Coleridge left for Germany in September of this year 1798.]

34. TO ROBERT SOUTHEY

Saturday, July 28th, 1798.

I am ashamed that I have not thanked you before this for the 'Joan of Arc,' but I did not know your address, and it did not occur to me to write through Cottle. The poem delighted me, and the notes amused me, but methinks she of Neufchatel, in the print, holds her sword too 'like a dancer.' I sent your *notice* to Phillips, particularly requesting an immediate insertion, but I suppose it came too late. I am sometimes curious to know what progress you make in that same 'Calendar:' whether you insert the nine worthies and Whittington? what you do or how you can manage when two Saints meet and quarrel for precedency? Martlemas, and Candlemas, and Christmas, are glorious themes for a writer like you, antiquity-bitten, smit with the love of boars' heads and rosemary; but how you can ennoble the 1st of April I know not. By the way I had a thing to say, but a certain false modesty has hitherto prevented me: perhaps I can best communicate my wish by a hint,—my birthday is on the 10th of February, New Style; but if it interferes with any remarkable event, why rather than my country should lose her fame, I care

not if I put my nativity back eleven days. Fine family patronage for your 'Calendar,' if that old lady of prolific memory were living, who lies (or lyes) in some church in London (saints forgive me, but I have forgot *what* church), attesting that enormous legend of as many children as days in the year. I marvel her impudence did not grasp at a leap-year. Three hundred and sixty-five dedications, and all in a family—you might spit in spirit on the oneness of Mæcenas' patronage!

Samuel Taylor Coleridge, to the eternal regret of his native Devonshire, emigrates to Westphalia—'Poor Lamb (these were his last words), if he wants any *knowledge*, he may apply to me,'—in ordinary cases, I thanked him, I have an 'Encyclopædia' at hand, but on such an occasion as going over to a German university, I could not refrain from sending him the following propositions, to be by him defended or oppugned (or both) at Leipsic or Gottingen.

THESES QUÆDAM THEOLOGICÆ

I

'Whether God loves a lying angel better than a true man?'

II

'Whether the archangel Uriel *could* knowingly affirm an untruth, and whether, if he *could*, he *would* ?'

III

'Whether honesty be an angelic virtue, or not rather belonging to that class of qualities which the schoolmen term "*virtutes minus splendidæ et hominis et terræ nimis participes*?"'

IV

'Whether the seraphim ardentes do not manifest their goodness by the way of vision and theory? and whether practice be not a sub-celestial, and merely human virtue?'

V

'Whether the higher order of seraphim illuminati ever *sneer* ?'

VI

'Whether pure intelligences can *love*, or whether they can love anything besides pure intellect?'

VII

'Whether the beatific vision be anything more or less than a perpetual representment to each individual angel of his own present attainments, and future capabilities, something in the manner of mortal looking-glasses?'

VIII

'Whether an "immortal and amenable soul" may not come to be damned at last, and the man never suspect it beforehand?'

Samuel Taylor C. hath not deigned an answer; was it impertinent of me to avail myself of that offered source of knowledge? Lloyd is returned to town from Ipswich where he has been with his brother. He has brought home three acts of a Play which I have not yet read. The scene for the most part laid in a Brothel. O tempora, O mores! but as friend Coleridge said when he was talking bawdy to Miss — 'to the pure all things are pure.'

Wishing 'Madoc' may be born into the world with as splendid promise as the second birth or purification of the Maid of Neufchatel,—I remain yours sincerely,

C. LAMB.

I hope Edith is better; my kindest remembrances to her. You have a good deal of trifling to forgive in this letter.

Love and remembrances to Cottle.

[This is Lamb's first letter to Southey that has been preserved. Probably others came before it. Southey now becomes Lamb's chief correspondent for some months.

Southey's *Joan of Arc*, second edition, had been published by Cottle in 1798. It has no frontispiece: the print of Joan of Arc must have come separately.

'Like a dancer' is a reference to the lines:

He at Philippi kept
His sword e'en as a dancer.

—*Ant. and Cleo.*, III. xi. 35–6.

Phillips was Sir Richard Phillips (1767–1840), editor of the *Monthly Magazine* and the publisher satirized in Borrow's *Lavengro*.

The Calendar ultimately became the *Annual Anthology*. Southey had at first an idea of making it a poetical calendar or almanac.

'That old lady of prolific memory.' Lamb is thinking, I imagine, of the story in Howell's *Familiar Letters* (also in Evelyn's *Diary*) of the 'Wonder of Nature' near the Hague. 'That Wonder of Nature is a Church-monument, where an earl and a lady are engraven with 365 children about them, which were

all deliver'd at one birth.' The story tells that a beggar woman with twins asked alms of the countess, who denying that it was possible for two children to be born at once and vilifying the beggar, that woman cursed her and called upon God to show His judgment upon her by causing her to bear 'at one birth as many children as there are days in the year, which she did before the same year's end, having never borne child before.' Howell seems to have been convinced of the authenticity of the story by the spectacle of the christening basin used by the family. The beggar, who spoke on the third day of the year, meant as many days as had been in that year—three.

'Virtutes, etc.' Note the slight variation from the formula above: 'The less shining virtues, savouring too much of man and earth.'

Edith was Southey's wife.]

35. TO ROBERT LLOYD

MY DEAR ROBERT,

[No date: *Autumn 1798.*]

I am a good deal occupied with a calamity near home, but not so much as to prevent my thinking about you with the warmest affection—you are among my very dearest friends. I know you will feel deeply when you hear that my poor sister is unwell again; one of her old disorders, but I trust it will hold no longer than her former illnesses have done. Do not imagine, Robert, that I sink under this misfortune, I have been season'd to such events, and think I could bear anything tolerably well. My own health is left me, and my good spirits, and I have some duties to perform—these duties shall be *my object*. I wish, Robert, you could find an object. I know the painfulness of vacuity, all its achings and inexplicable longings. I wish to God I could recommend any plan to you. Stock your mind well with religious knowledge; discipline it to wait with patience for duties that may be your lot in life; prepare yourself not to expect too much out of yourself; *read and think*. This is all commonplace advice, I know. I know, too, that it is easy to give advice which in like circumstances we might not follow ourselves. You must depend upon yourself—there will come a time when you will wonder you were not more content. I know you will excuse my saying any more.

Be assured of my kindest, warmest affection.

C. LAMB.

[This is the first letter to Robert Lloyd, a younger brother of Charles Lloyd, whom Lamb had probably met when on his visit to Birmingham in the previous summer. The youth, not yet twenty, was at this time apprenticed to a Quaker draper at Saffron Walden.]

36. TO ROBERT LLOYD

[No date: *Autumn 1798.*]

MY DEAR ROBERT,

Mary is better, and I trust that she will yet be restored to me. I am in good spirits, so do not be anxious about me. I hope you get reconciled to your situation. The worst in it is that you have no *friend* to talk to—but wait in patience, and you will in good time make friends. The having a friend is not indispensably necessary to virtue or happiness. Religion removes those barriers of sentiment which partition us from the disinterested love of our brethren—we are commanded to love our enemies, to do good to those that hate us; how much more is it our duty then to cultivate a forbearance and complacence towards those who only differ from us in dispositions and ways of thinking? There is always, without very unusual care there must always be, something of Self in friendship; we love our friend because he is like ourselves; can consequences altogether unmix'd and pure be reasonably expected from such a source—do not even the publicans and sinners the same? Say, that you love a friend for his moral qualities, is it not rather because those qualities resemble what you fancy your own? This, then, is not without danger. The only true cement of a valuable friendship, the only thing that even makes it not sinful, is when two friends propose to become mutually of benefit to each other in a moral or religious way. But even this friendship is perpetually liable to the mixture of something not pure; we love our friend, because he is *ours*—so we do our money, our wit, our knowledge, our virtue; and wherever this sense of APPROPRIATION and PROPERTY enters, so much is to be subtracted from the value of that friendship or that virtue. Our duties are to do good, expecting nothing again; to bear with contrary dispositions; to be candid and forgiving, not to crave and long after a communication of sentiment and feeling, but rather to avoid dwelling upon those feelings, however

good, because they are our own. A man may be intemperate and selfish who indulges in *good feelings* for the mere pleasure they give him. I do not wish to deter you from making a friend, a true friend, and such a friendship, where the parties are not blind to each other's faults, is very useful and valuable. I perceive a tendency in you to this error, Robert. I know you have chosen to take up an high opinion of my moral worth, but I say it before God, and I do not lie, you are mistaken in me. I could not bear to lay open all my failings to you, for the sentiment of shame would be too pungent. Let this be as an example to you. Robert, friends fall off, friends mistake us, they change, they grow unlike us, they go away, they die; but God is everlasting and incapable of change, and to Him we may look with cheerful, unpresumptuous hope, while we discharge the duties of life in situations more untowardly than yours. You complain of the impossibility of improving yourself, but be assured that the opportunity of improvement lies more in the mind than the situation. Humble yourself before God, cast out the selfish principle, wait in patience, do good in every way you can to all sorts of people, never be easy to neglect a duty tho' a small one, praise God for all, and see His hand in all things, and He will in time raise you up *many friends*—or be Himself instead an unchanging friend. God bless you.

C. LAMB.

[This letter calls for no comment other than that it shows what Lamb's unselfishness could be. It is interesting to remember that at this date he was only a little more than twenty-three.]

37. TO ROBERT SOUTHEY

[Dated at end]: Oct. 18th, 1798.

DEAR SOUTHEY,

I have at last been so fortunate as to pick up Wither's Emblems for you, that 'old book and quaint,' as the brief author of *Ros Gray* hath it—it is in most detestable state of preservation, and the cuts are of a fainter impression than I have seen. Some child, the curse of antiquaries and bane of bibliopolical rarities, hath been dabbling in some of them with its paint and dirty

fingers, and in particular hath a little sullied the author's own portraiture, which I think valuable, as the poem that accompanies it is no common one; this last excepted, the Emblems are far inferior to old Quarles. I once told you otherwise, but I had not then read old Q. with attention. I have pickt up too another copy of Quarles for ninepence!!! O tempora! O lectores! so that if you have lost or parted with your own copy, say so, and I can furnish you; for you prize these things more than I do. You will be amused, I think, with honest Wither's 'Supersedeas to all them whose custom it is, without any deserving, to importune authors to give unto them their books.' I am sorry 'tis imperfect, as the Lottery board annexed to it also is. Methinks you might modernize and elegantize this Supersedeas, and place it in front of your Joan of Arc, as a gentle hint to Messrs. Park, &c.

One of the happiest emblems and comicallest cuts is the owl and little chirpers, page 63.

Wishing you all amusement, which your true emblem-fancier can scarce fail to find in even bad emblems, I remain your Caterer to command,

C. LAMB.

Love and respects to Edith. I hope she is well. How does your Calendar prosper?

[This letter contains Lamb's first reference to *Rosamund Gray*, his only novel, which had been published a little earlier in the year. 'Wither's *Emblems*, an "old book and quaint,"' was one of the few volumes belonging to old Margaret, Rosamund's grandmother (Chapter I). See next letter and note.

Wither's *Emblems* was published in 1635; Quarles's in the same year.

Park & Co. A reference to the many rarer English poems which Thomas Park (1759-1834) 'collected.']

38. TO ROBERT SOUTHEY

[29th October 1798.]

DEAR SOUTHEY,

I thank you heartily for the Eclogue; it pleases me mightily, being so full of picture-work and circumstances. I find no fault in it, unless perhaps that Joanna's ruin is a catastrophe too trite:

and this is not the first or second time you have clothed your indignation, in verse, in a tale of ruined innocence. The old lady, spinning in the sun, I hope would not disdain to claim some kindred with old Margaret. I could almost wish you to vary some circumstances in the conclusion. A gentleman seducer has so often been described in prose and verse; what if you had accomplished Joanna's ruin by the clumsy arts and rustic gifts of some country-fellow? I am thinking, I believe, of the song,

An old woman clothed in grey,
Whose daughter was charming and young,
And she was deluded away
By Roger's false flattering tongue.

A Roger-Lothario would be a novel character: I think you might paint him very well. You may think this a very silly suggestion, and so, indeed, it is; but, in good truth, nothing else but the first words of that foolish ballad put me upon scribbling my 'Rosa-mund.' But I thank you heartily for the poem. Not having anything of my own to send you in return—though, to tell truth, I am at work upon something, which if I were to cut away and garble, perhaps I might send you an extract or two that might not displease you; but I will not do that; and whether it will come to anything, I know not, for I am as slow as a Fleming painter when I compose anything. I will crave leave to put down a few lines of old Christopher Marlow's; I take them from his tragedy, 'The Jew of Malta.' The Jew is a famous character, quite out of nature; but, when we consider the terrible idea our simple ancestors had of a Jew, not more to be discommended for a certain discolouring (I think Addison calls it) than the witches and fairies of Marlow's mighty successor. The scene is betwixt Barabas, the Jew, and Ithamore, a Turkish captive exposed to sale for a slave.

BARABAS

(*A precious rascal*)

As for myself, I walk abroad a-nights,
And kill sick people groaning under walls:
Sometimes I go about, and poison wells;
And now and then, to cherish Christian thieves,
I am content to lose some of my crowns,
That I may, walking in my gallery,

See 'm go pinioned along by my door.
 Being young, I studied physic, and began
 To practise first upon the Italian:
 There I enriched the priests with burials,
 And always kept the sexton's arms in ure
 With digging graves and ringing dead men's knells;
 And, after that, was I an engineer,
 And in the wars 'twixt France and Germany,
 Under pretence of serving [helping] Charles the Fifth,
 Slew friend and enemy with my stratagems.
 Then after that was I an usurer,
 And with extorting, cozening, forfeiting,
 And tricks belonging unto brokery,
 I fill'd the jails with bankrupts in a year,
 And with young orphans planted hospitals,
 And every moon made some or other mad;
 And now and then one hang'd [hang] himself for grief,
 Pinning upon his breast a long great scroll,
 How I with interest tormented him.

Now hear Ithamore, the other gentle nature, explain how he spent his time:

ITHAMORE

(A comical dog)

Faith, master, in setting Christian villages on fire,
 Chaining of eunuchs, binding galley-slaves.
 One time I was an hostler at [in] an inn,
 And in the night-time secretly would I steal
 To travellers' chambers, and there cut their throats.
 Once at Jerusalem, where the pilgrims kneel'd,
 I strowed powder on the marble stones,
 And therewithal their knees would rackle so,
 That I have laugh'd a-good to see the cripples
 Go limping home to Christendom on stilts.

BARABAS

Why, this is something——

There is a mixture of the ludicrous and the terrible in these lines, brimful of genius and antique invention, that at first reminded me of your old description of cruelty in hell, which was in the true Hogarthian style. I need not tell you that Marlow was author of that pretty madrigal, 'Come live with me, and be my Love,' and of the tragedy of 'Edward II.,' in which are

certain *lines* unequalled in our English tongue. Honest Walton mentions the said madrigal under the denomination of 'certain smooth verses made long since by Kit Marlow.'

I am glad you have put me on the scent after old Quarles. If I do not put up those eclogues, and that shortly, say I am no true-nosed hound. I have had a letter from Lloyd; the young metaphysician of Caius is well, and is busy recanting the new heresy, metaphysics, for the old dogma, Greek. My sister, I thank you, is quite well. She had a slight attack the other day, which frightened me a good deal; but it went off unaccountably. Love and respects to Edith.

Yours sincerely,

C. LAMB.

[The eclogue was *The Ruined Cottage*, in which Joanna and her widowed mother are at first as happy as Rosamund Gray and old blind Margaret. As in Lamb's story, so in Southey's poem, this state of felicity is overturned by a seducer.

'An old woman clothed in grey.' Mr. Ralph A. Beals informs me that Lamb could have found this ballad, an inferior and rather coarse ditty, in *A Collection of Old Ballads Collected from the Best and Most Ancient Copies Extant*, 3 vols., London, 1723-5—just such a book as might have been in the library of Samuel Salt. Lamb says that the first line put him upon writing *Rosamund Gray*, but he is generally supposed to have taken his heroine's name from a song by Charles Lloyd, entitled *Rosamund Gray*, published among his *Poems* in 1795. At the end of the novel *Matravis*, the seducer, in his ravings, sings the ballad.

The 'something' upon which Lamb was then at work was his play *John Woodvil*, in those early days known as *Pride's Cure*.

'Your old description of cruelty in hell.' In *Joan of Arc*. See Letter 3.

'If I do not put up those eclogues.' Lamb does not return to this subject.

Lloyd had just gone to Cambridge, to Caius College.

This letter is of especial interest as illustrating Lamb's studies in the old dramatists which were to bear fruit in his *Dramatic Specimens* in 1808, where the note on the *Jew of Malta* and Jews in general should be read in connection with the comments here.]

39. TO ROBERT SOUTHEY

Nov. 3, 1798.

I have read your Eclogue [*The Wedding*] repeatedly, and cannot call it bald, or without interest; the cast of it, and the design are completely original, and may set people upon thinking: it is as poetical as the subject requires, which asks no poetry;

but it is defective in pathos. The woman's own story is the tamest part of it—I should like you to remould that—it too much resembles the young maid's history: both had been in service. Even the omission would not injure the poem; after the words 'growing wants,' you might, not unconnectedly, introduce 'look at that little chub' down to 'welcome one.' And, decidedly, I would have you end it somehow thus,

Give them at least this evening a good meal.

[Gives her money.]

Now, fare thee well; hereafter you have taught me
To give sad meaning to the village bells, &c.,

which would leave a stronger impression (as well as more pleasingly recall the beginning of the Eclogue), than the present commonplace reference to a better world, which the woman 'must have heard at church.' I should like you, too, a good deal to enlarge the most striking part, as it might have been, of the poem—'Is it idleness?' &c., that affords a good field for dwelling on sickness and inabilities, and old age. And you might also a good deal enrich the piece with a picture of a country wedding: the woman might very well, in a transient fit of oblivion, dwell upon the ceremony and circumstances of her own nuptials six years ago, the smugness of the bridegroom, the feastings, the cheap merriment, the welcomings, and the secret envyings of the maidens—then dropping all this, recur to her present lot. I do not know that I can suggest anything else, or that I have suggested anything new or material.

I shall be very glad to see some more poetry, though I fear your trouble in transcribing will be greater than the service my remarks may do them.

Yours affectionately,

C. LAMB.

I cut my letter short because I am called off to business.

40. TO ROBERT SOUTHEY

Nov. 8th, 1798.

I do not know that I much prefer this Eclogue [*The Last of the Flock*] to the last [*The Wedding*]; both are inferior to the former [*The Ruined Cottage*].

And when he came to shake me by the hand,
And spake as kindly to me as he used,
I hardly knew his voice—

is the only passage that affected me.

Servants speak, and their language ought to be plain, and not much raised above the common, else I should find fault with the bathos of this passage:

And when I heard the bell strike out,
I thought (what?) that I had never heard it toll
So dismally before.

I like the destruction of the martens' old nests hugely, having just such a circumstance in my memory. I should be very glad to see your remaining Eclogue, if not too much trouble, as you give me reason to expect it will be the second best.

I perfectly accord with your opinion of Old Wither. Quarles is a wittier writer, but Wither lays more hold of the heart. Quarles thinks of his audience when he lectures; Wither soliloquises in company with a full heart. What wretched stuff are the 'Divine Fancies' of Quarles! Religion appears to him no longer valuable than it furnishes matter for quibbles and riddles; he turns God's grace into wantonness. Wither is like an old friend, whose warm-heartedness and estimable qualities make us wish he possessed more genius, but at the same time make us willing to dispense with that want. I always love W., and sometimes admire Q. Still that portrait poem is a fine one; and the extract from 'The Shepherds' Hunting' places him in a starry height far above Quarles. If you wrote that review in 'Crit. Rev.,' I am sorry you are so sparing of praise to the 'Ancient Marinere;'—so far from calling it, as you do, with some wit, but more severity, 'A Dutch Attempt,' &c., I call it a right English attempt, and a successful one, to dethrone German sublimity. You have selected a passage fertile in unmeaning miracles, but have passed by fifty passages as miraculous as the miracles they celebrate. I never so deeply felt the pathetic as in that part,

A spring of love gush'd from my heart,
And I bless'd them unaware—

It stung me into high pleasure through sufferings. Lloyd does

not like it; his head is too metaphysical, and your taste too correct; at least I must allege something against you both, to excuse my own dotage—

So lonely 'twas, that God himself
Scarce seemèd there to be!— &c., &c.

But you allow some elaborate beauties—you should have extracted 'em. 'The Ancient Marinere' plays more tricks with the mind than that last poem, which is yet one of the finest written. But I am getting too dogmatical; and before I degenerate into abuse, I will conclude with assuring you that I am

Sincerely yours,

C. LAMB.

I am going to meet Lloyd at Ware on Saturday, to return on Sunday. Have you any commands or commendations to the metaphysician? I shall be very happy if you will dine or spend any time with me in your way through the great ugly city; but I know you have other ties upon you in these parts.

Love and respects to Edith, and friendly remembrances to Cottle.

[The destruction of the martens' nests, in *The Last of the Flock*, runs thus:

I remember,
Eight months ago, when the young Squire began
To alter the old mansion, they destroy'd
The martins' nests, that had stood undisturb'd
Under that roof, . . . ay! long before my memory.
I shook my head at seeing it, and thought
No good could follow.

Lamb's ripe judgment of Wither will be found in his essay 'On the Poetical Works of George Wither,' in the *Works*, 1818. 'The portrait poem' would be *The Author's Meditation upon Sight of His Picture*, prefixed to *Emblems*, 1635.

Lyrical Ballads, by Wordsworth and Coleridge, had just been published by Cottle. *The Ancient Mariner* stood first. 'That last poem' was Wordsworth's *Lines Written a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey*. Southey (?) reviewed the book in the *Critical Review* for October 1798. Of *The Ancient Mariner* he said: 'It is a Dutch attempt at German sublimity. Genius has here been employed in producing a poem of little merit.'

The following letter, with signs of returning good spirits in it, seems to have been added to one written to another member of the Lloyd family, with whom Lamb is becoming generally acquainted.]

41. TO ROBERT LLOYD

Now 'tis Robert's turn.

[13th November 1798.]

MY DEAR ROBERT,

One passage in your Letter a little displeas'd me. The rest was nothing but kindness, which Robert's letters are ever brimful of. You say that 'this World to you seems drain'd of all its sweets!' At first I had hoped you only meant to insinuate the high price of Sugar! but I am afraid you meant more. O Robert, I don't know what you call sweet. Honey and the honeycomb, roses and violets, are yet in the earth. The sun and moon yet reign in Heaven, and the lesser lights keep up their pretty twinklings. Meats and drinks, sweet sights and sweet smells, a country walk, spring and autumn, follies and repentance, quarrels and reconcilements, have all a sweetness by turns. Good humour and good nature, friends at home that love you, and friends abroad that miss you, you possess all these things, and more innumerable, and these are all sweet things. . . . You may extract honey from everything; do not go a gathering after gall. The Bees are wiser in their generation than the race of sonnet writers and complainers, Bowles's and Charlotte Smiths, and all that tribe, who can see no joys but what are past, and fill people's heads with notions of the unsatisfying nature of Earthly comforts. I assure you I find this world a very pretty place. My kind love to all your Sisters and to Thomas—he never writes to me—and tell Susanna I forgive her.

C. LAMB.

London, the 13th November, 1798.

[Here should come a letter from Lamb to Southey, which I have not succeeded in finding, containing an extract from Lamb's play *John Woodvil*. I have taken the text from the version of the play sent to Manning late in 1800.

THE DYING LOVER

Margaret. All are not false. I knew a youth who died
For grief, because his Love proved so,
And married to another.
I saw him on the wedding day,
For he was present in the church that day,

And in his best apparel too,
 As one that came to grace the ceremony.
 I mark'd him when the ring was given,
 His countenance never changed;
 And when the priest pronounced the marriage blessing,
 He put a silent prayer up for the bride,
For they stood near who saw his lips move.
 He came invited to the marriage-feast
 With the bride's friends,
 And was the merriest of them all that day;
 But they, who knew him best, call'd it feign'd mirth;
 And others said,
 He wore a smile like death's upon his face.
 His presence dash'd all the beholders' mirth,
 And he went away in tears.

Simon. What followed then?

Margaret. Oh! then
 He did not as neglected suitors use
 Affect a life of solitude in shades,
 But lived,
 In free discourse and sweet society,
 Among his friends who knew his gentle nature best.
 Yet ever when he smiled,
 There was a mystery legible in his face,
 That whoso saw him said he was a man
 Not long for this world.—
 And true it was, for even then
 The silent love was feeding at his heart
 Of which he died:
 Nor ever spake word of reproach,
 Only he wish'd in death that his remains
 Might find a poor grave in some spot, not far
 From his mistress' family vault, 'being the place
 Where one day Anna should herself be laid.'

The line in italics Lamb crossed through in the Manning copy. The last four lines he crossed through and marked 'very bad.' I have reproduced them here because of the autobiographical hint contained in the word 'Anna,' which was the name given by Lamb to his 'fair-haired maid' in his love sonnets.]

42. TO ROBERT LLOYD

[P.M. 20th November 1798.]

As the little copy of verses I sent gave Priscilla and Robert some pleasure, I now send them another little tale, which is all I

can send, for my stock will be exhausted. . . . Tis a tale of witchcraft, told by an old Steward in the family to Margaret, the ward of Sir Walter Woodvil. *Who* Sir Walter is you may come to know bye and bye, when I have finish'd a Poem, from which this and the other are extracts, and all the extracts I can make without mutilating.

[*Here comes the extract as in the preceding letter to Southey.*]

A *mandrake* is a root resembling the human form, as sometimes a carrot does, and the old superstition is, that when the mandrake is torn out of the earth a dreadful shriek is heard, which makes all who hear it go mad. 'Tis a fatal poison besides.

I will here conclude my tiny portion of Prose with hoping you may like the story, and my kind remembrances to all.

C. LAMB.

Write soon, Robert.

43. TO ROBERT SOUTHEY

Nov. 28th, 1798.

I can have no objection to your printing 'Mystery of God' with my name and all due acknowledgments for the honour and favour of the communication; indeed, 'tis a poem that can dishonour no name. Now, that is in the true strain of modern modesto-vanitas. . . . But for the sonnet, I heartily wish it, as I thought it was, dead and forgotten. If the exact circumstances under which I wrote could be known or told, it would be an interesting sonnet; but to an indifferent and stranger reader it must appear a very bald thing, certainly inadmissible in a compilation. I wish you could affix a different name to the volume; there is a contemptible book, a wretched assortment of vapid feelings, entitled 'Pratt's Gleanings,' which hath damned and appropriated the title for ever. Pray think of some other. The gentleman is better known (better had he remained unknown) by an Ode to Benevolence, written and spoken for and at the annual dinner of the Humane Society, who walk in procession once a-year, with all the objects of their charity before them, to return God thanks for giving them such benevolent hearts.

I like 'Bishop Bruno;' but not so abundantly as your 'Witch Ballad,' which is an exquisite thing of its kind.

I showed my 'Witch' and 'Dying Lover' to Dyer last night; but George could not comprehend how that could be poetry which did not go upon ten feet, as George and his predecessors had taught it to do; so George read me some lectures on the distinguishing qualities of the Ode, the Epigram, and the Epic, and went home to illustrate his doctrine by correcting a proof sheet of his own Lyrics. George writes odes where the rhymes, like fashionable man and wife, keep a comfortable distance of six or eight lines apart, and calls that 'observing the laws of verse.' George tells you, before he recites, that you must listen with great attention, or you'll miss the rhymes. I did so, and found them pretty exact. George, speaking of the dead Ossian, exclaimeth, 'Dark are the poet's eyes.' I humbly represented to him that his own eyes were dark and many a living bard's besides, and recommended 'Clos'd are the poet's eyes.' But that would not do. I found there was an antithesis between the darkness of his eyes and the splendour of his genius; and I acquiesced.

Your recipe for a Turk's poison is invaluable and truly Marlowish. . . . Lloyd objects to 'shutting up the womb of his purse' in my Curse (which for a Christian witch in a Christian country is not too mild, I hope); do you object? I think there is a strangeness in the idea, as well as 'shaking the poor like snakes from his door,' which suits the speaker. Witches illustrate, as fine ladies do, from their own familiar objects, and snakes and the shutting up of wombs are in their way. I don't know that this last charge has been before brought against 'em, nor either the sour milk or the mandrake babe; but I affirm these be things a witch would do if she could.

My Tragedy will be a medley (or I intend it to be a medley) of laughter and tears, prose and verse, and in some places rhyme, songs, wit, pathos, humour, and, if possible, sublimity; at least, it is not a fault in my intention, if it does not comprehend most of these discordant colours. Heaven send they dance not the 'Dance of Death!' I hear that the Two Noble Englishmen have parted no sooner than they set foot on German earth, but I have not heard the reason—possibly, to give novelists an handle to exclaim, 'Ah me! what things are perfect?' I think I shall adopt

your emendation in the 'Dying Lover,' though I do not myself feel the objection against 'Silent Prayer.'

My tailor has brought me home a new coat lapelled, with a velvet collar. He assures me everybody wears velvet collars now. Some are born fashionable, some achieve fashion, and others, like your humble servant, have fashion thrust upon them. The rogue has been making inroads hitherto by modest degrees, foisting upon me an additional button, recommending gaiters; but to come upon me thus in a full tide of luxury, neither becomes him as a tailor nor the ninth of a man. My meek gentleman was robbed the other day, coming with his wife and family in a one-horse shay from Hampstead; the villains rifled him of four guineas, some shillings and half-pence, and a bundle of customers' measures, which they swore were bank-notes. They did not shoot him, and when they rode off he address them with profound gratitude, making a congee: 'Gentlemen, I wish you good night, and we are very much obliged to you that you have not used us ill!' And this is the cuckoo that has had the audacity to foist upon me ten buttons on a side and a black velvet collar—A damn'd ninth of a scoundrel!

When you write to Lloyd, he wishes his Jacobin correspondents to address him as Mr. C. L. Love and respects to Edith. I hope she is well.

Yours sincerely,

C. LAMB.

[The poem *Mystery of God* was, when printed in the *Annual Anthology* for 1799, entitled *Living without God in the World*. Lamb never reprinted it. It is not clear to what sonnet Lamb refers, possibly that to his sister, printed on page 77, which he himself never reprinted. It was at that time intended to call Southey's collection *Gleanings*; Lamb refers to the *Gleanings* of Samuel Jackson Pratt (1749-1814), a very busy maker of books, published in 1795-9. His *Triumph of Benevolence* was published in 1786.

Southey's witch ballad was *The Old Woman of Berkeley*.

George Dyer's principal works in verse are contained in his *Poems*, 1802, and *Poetics*, 1812. He retained the epithet 'dark' for Ossian's eyes.

Southey's recipe for a Turk's poison I do not find. It may have existed only in a letter.

A reference to the poem in Letter 49 will explain the remarks about witches' curses.

The Two Noble Englishmen (a sarcastic reference drawn, I imagine, from *Palamon and Arcite*, or from the disputed play on the same story, *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, in which Lamb and Coleridge recognized Shakespeare's hand)

were Coleridge and Wordsworth, then in Germany. Nothing definite is known, but they seem quite amicably to have decided to take independent courses.

'Lloyd's Jacobin correspondents.' This is Lamb's only allusion to the attack which had been made by the *Anti-Jacobin* upon himself, Lloyd, and their friends, particularly Coleridge and Southey. In *The New Morality*, in the last number of Canning's paper, they had been thus grouped:

And ye five other wandering Bards that move
In sweet accord of harmony and love,
C—dge and S—th—y, L—d, and L—be & Co.
Tune all your mystic harps to praise Lepaux!

—Lepaux being the high-priest of Theophilanthropy. When *The New Morality* was reprinted in *The Beauties of the 'Anti-Jacobin'* in 1799, a savage footnote on Coleridge was appended, accusing him of hypocrisy and the desertion of his wife and children, and adding 'Ex uno disce his associates Southey and Lamb.' Again, in the first number of the *Anti-Jacobin Review and Magazine*, August 1798, was a picture by Gillray, representing the worshippers of Lepaux, wherein Lloyd and Lamb appeared as a toad and a frog reading their own *Blank Verse*, and Coleridge and Southey, as donkeys, flourish 'Dactylics' and 'Sapphics.' In September the federated poets were again touched upon in a parody of the *Ode to the Passions*:

See! faithful to their mighty dam,
C—dge, S—th—y, L—d, and L—b
In splay-foot madrigals of love,
Soft moaning like the widow'd dove,
Pour, side-by-side, their sympathetic notes;
Of equal rights, and civic feasts,
And tyrant kings, and knavish priests,
Swift through the land the tuneful mischief floats.

And now to softer strains they struck the lyre,
They sung the beetle or the mole,
The dying kid, or ass's foal,
By cruel man permitted to expire.

Lloyd took the caricature and the verses with his customary seriousness, going so far as to indite a 'Letter to the *Anti-Jacobin* Reviewers,' which was printed in Birmingham in 1799. Therein he defended Lamb with some vigour: 'The person you have thus leagued in a partnership of infamy with me is Mr. Charles Lamb, a man who, so far from being a democrat, would be the first person to assent to the opinions contained in the foregoing pages: he is a man too much occupied with real and painful duties—duties of high personal self-denial—to trouble himself about speculative matters.']

44. TO ROBERT SOUTHEY

Dec. 27, 1798.

DEAR SOUTHEY,

Your friend John May has formerly made kind offers to Lloyd of serving me in the India house by the interest of his friend Sir Francis Baring—It is not likely that I shall ever put his goodness to the test on my own account, for my prospects are very comfortable. But I know a man, a young man, whom he could serve thro' the same channel, and I think would be disposed to serve if he were acquainted with his case. This poor fellow (whom I know just enough of to vouch for his strict integrity & worth) has lost two or three employments from illness, which he cannot regain; he was once insane, & from the distressful uncertainty of his livelihood has reason to apprehend a return of that malady—He has been for some time dependant on a woman whose lodger he formerly was, but who can ill afford to maintain him, and I know that on Christmas night last he actually walk'd about the streets all night, rather than accept of her Bed, which she offer'd him, and offer'd herself to sleep in the kitchen, and that in consequence of that severe cold he is labouring under a bilious disorder, besides a depression of spirits, which incapacitates him from exertion when he most needs it—For God's sake, Southey, if it does not go against you to ask favors, do it now—ask it as for me—but do not do a violence to your feelings, because he does not know of this application, and will suffer no disappointment—What I meant to say was this—there are in the India house what are called *Extra Clerks*, not on the Establishment, like me, but employed in Extra business, by-jobs—these get about £50 a year, or rather more, but never rise—a Director can put in at any time a young man in this office, and it is by no means consider'd so great a favor as making an establish'd Clerk. He would think himself as rich as an Emperor if he could get such a certain situation, and be relieved from those disquietudes which I do fear may one day bring back his distemper—

You know John May better than I do, but I know enough to believe that he is a good man—he did make me that offer I have mention'd, but you will perceive that such an offer cannot authorize me in applying for another Person.

But I cannot help writing to you on the subject, for the young man is perpetually before my eyes, and I should feel it a crime not to strain all my petty interest to do him service, tho' I put my own delicacy to the question by so doing—I have made one other unsuccessful attempt already—

At all events I will thank you to write, for I am tormented with anxiety—

I suppose you have somewhere heard that poor Mary Dollin has poisoned herself, after some interviews with John Reid, the ci-devant Alphonso of her days of hope.

How is Edith?

C. LAMB.

[Mrs. Anderson found that John May was a friend and correspondent of Southey whom he had met at Lisbon: not to be confounded with Coleridge's inn-keeping May.

Sir Francis Baring was a director of the East India Company. I have no knowledge as to who the young man was, but, as we shall see, he is by no means the only one whom Lamb made efforts to assist.

Mrs. Anderson discovered that Mary Dollin was another of the associates of that fatal youth, Charles Lloyd. We find something about her in his letters to Thomas Manning at this time. Thus: 'Robert Southey writes to me as if he were commencing ideot—he talks of abandoning philosophy, and turning Catholic confessor—I find now, alas too late! that he had day dreams of marrying me to Miss Dollin—and why forsooth?—because the poor girl had passions and fell on Lamb's knees. The fellow will make me vain, if all damsels that he may hear of that lack daily bread excite in him dreams about me—he takes me for a second Mahomet.' John Reid is also mentioned, but only very casually.]

45. TO ROBERT SOUTHEY

Jan. 21st, 1799.

I am requested by Lloyd to excuse his not replying to a kind letter received from you. He is at present situated in most distressful family perplexities, which I am not at liberty to explain; but they are such as to demand all the strength of his mind, and quite exclude any attention to foreign objects. His brother Robert (the flower of his family) hath eloped from the persecutions of his father, and has taken shelter with me. What the issue of his adventure will be, I know not. He hath the sweetness of an angel in his heart, combined with admirable

firmness of purpose: an uncultivated, but very original, and, I think, superior genius. But this step of his is but a small part of their family troubles.

I am to blame for not writing to you before on *my own account*; but I know you can dispense with the expressions of gratitude, or I should have thanked you before for all May's kindness. He has liberally supplied the person I spoke to you of with money, and had procured him a situation just after himself had lighted upon a similar one and engaged too far to recede. But May's kindness was the same, and my thanks to you and him are the same. May went about on this business as if it had been his own. But you knew John May before this: so I will be silent.

I shall be very glad to hear from you when convenient. I do not know how your Calendar and other affairs thrive; but, above all, I have not heard a great while of your 'Madoc'—the *opus magnum*. I would willingly send you something to give a value to this letter; but I have only one slight passage to send you, scarce worth the sending, which I want to edge in somewhere into my play, which, by the way, hath not received the addition of ten lines, besides, since I saw you. A father, old Walter Woodvil (the witch's PROTÉGÉ) relates this of his son John, who 'fought in adverse armies,' being a royalist, and his father a parliamentary man:—

I saw him in the day of Worcester fight,
Whither he came at twice seven years,
Under the discipline of the Lord Falkland
(His uncle by the mother's side,
Who gave his youthful politics a bent
Quite *from* the principles of his father's house;)
There did I see this valiant Lamb of Mars,
This sprig of honour, this unbearded John,
This veteran in green years, this sprout, this Woodvil,
(With dreadful ease guiding a fire-hot steed,
Which seem'd to scorn the manage of a boy),
Prick forth with such a *mirth* into the field,
To mingle rivalry and acts of war
Even with the sinewy masters of the art,—
You would have thought the work of blood had been
A play-game merely, and the rabid Mars
Had put his harmful hostile nature off,
To instruct raw youth in images of war,

And practice of the unedged players' foils.
 The rough fanatic and blood-practised soldiery,
 Seeing such hope and virtue in the boy,
 Disclosed their ranks to let him pass unhurt,
 Checking their swords' uncivil injuries,
 As loth to mar that curious workmanship
 Of Valour's beauty pourtray'd in his face.

Lloyd objects to 'pourtrayed in his face,'—do you? I like the line.

I shall clap this in somewhere. I think there is a spirit through the lines; perhaps the 7th, 8th, and 9th owe their origin to Shakspeare, though no image is borrowed.

He says in 'Henry the Fourth'—

This infant Hotspur,
 Mars in swathing clothes.

[See Pt. I, III. ii. 111, 112.]

But pray did Lord Falkland die before Worcester fight? In that case I must make bold to unclify some other nobleman.

Kind love and respects to Edith.

C. LAMB.

[How long Robert Lloyd was with Lamb we do not know; nor of what nature were the 'persecutions' to which he was subjected. According to the evidence at our disposal, Charles Lloyd, sen., was a good father.

Southey's *Madoc* was not published until 1805.

The passage from the play was not printed in *John Woodvil*. This, together with *The Dying Lover*, is to be found only in the discarded version, printed in the Notes to my edition of Lamb's *Works*. Lord Falkland had been killed at Newbury eight years before Worcester fight. Lamb altered the names to Ashley and Naseby, although Sir Anthony Cooper was not made Lord Ashley until sixteen years after Naseby was fought.]

46. TO ROBERT SOUTHEY

[No date: *Late January or early February 1799.*]

DR. SOUTHEY,

Lloyd will now be able to give you an account of himself, so to him I leave you for satisfaction. Great part of his troubles are lightened by the partial recovery of his sister, who had been alarmingly ill with similar diseases to his own. The other part of the family troubles sleeps for the present, but I fear will awake

at some future time to *confound* and *disunite*. He will probably tell you all about it. Robert still continues here with me, his father has proposed nothing, but would willingly lure him back with fair professions. But Robert is endowed with a wise fortitude, and in this business has acted quite from himself, and wisely acted. His parents must come forward in the End. I like reducing parents to a sense of undutifulness. I like confounding the relations of life. Pray let me see you when you come to town, and contrive to give me some of your company.

I thank you heartily for your intended presents, but do by no means see the necessity you are under of burthening yourself thereby. You have read old Wither's *Supersedeas* to small purpose. You object to my pauses being at the end of my lines. I do not know any great difficulty I should find in diversifying or changing my blank verse; but I go upon the model of Shakspeare in my Play, and endeavour after a colloquial ease and spirit, something like him. I could so easily imitate Milton's versification; but my ear & feeling would reject it, or any approaches to it, in the *drama*. I do not know whether to be glad or sorry that witches have been detected aforesaid in shutting up of wombs. I certainly invented that conceit, and its coincidence with fact is incidental [? accidental], for I never heard it. I have not seen those verses on Col. Despard—I do not read any newspapers. Are they short, to copy without much trouble? I should like to see them.

I just send you a few rhymes from my play, the only rhymes in it—a forest-liver giving an account of his amusements:

What sports have you in the forest?
Not many,—some few,—as thus,
To see the sun to bed, and see him rise,
Like some hot amourist with glowing eyes,
Bursting the lazy bands of sleep that bound him:
With all his fires and travelling glories round him:
Sometimes the moon on soft night-clouds to rest,
Like beauty nestling in a young man's breast,
And all the winking stars, her handmaids, keep
Admiring silence, while those lovers sleep:
Sometimes outstretch'd in very idleness,
Nought doing, saying little, thinking less,
To view the leaves, thin dancers upon air,
Go eddying round; and small birds how they fare,

When mother Autumn fills their beaks with corn,
 Filch'd from the careless Amalthea's horn;
 And how the woods berries and worms provide,
 Without their pains, when earth hath nought beside
 To answer their small wants;
 To view the graceful deer come trooping by,
 Then pause, and gaze, then turn they know not why,
 Like bashful youngers in society;
 To mark the structure of a plant or tree;
 And all fair things of earth, how fair they be! &c. &c.

I love to anticipate charges of unoriginality: the first [third] line is almost Shakspeare's:—

To have my love to bed & to arise.

Midsummer Night's Dream [III. i. 174].

I think there is a sweetness in the versification not unlike some rhymes in that exquisite play, and the last line but three is yours:

An eye

That met the gaze, or turn'd it knew not why.

Rosamund's Epistle.

I shall anticipate all my play, and have nothing to shew you.
 An idea for Leviathan:—

Commentators on Job have been puzzled to find out a meaning for Leviathan,—'tis a whale, say some; a crocodile, say others. In my simple conjecture, Leviathan is neither more nor less than the Lord Mayor of London for the time being.

'Rosamund' sells well in London, maugre the non-reviewal of it.

I sincerely wish you better health, & better health to Edith. Kind remembrances to her.

C. LAMB.

If you come to town by Ash Wensday [6th February], you will certainly see Lloyd here—I expect him by that time.

My sister Mary was never in better health or spirits than now.

[Writing in June 1799, to Robert Lloyd, Priscilla, his sister, says: 'Lamb would not I think by any means be a person to take up your abode with. He is too much like yourself—he would encourage those feelings which it certainly is your duty to suppress. Your station in life—the duties which are pointed out by that rank in society which you are destined to fill—differ widely from

his.' When next we hear of Robert Lloyd he has returned to Birmingham, where his father soon afterwards bought him a partnership in a bookselling and printing business.

'Col. Despard.' I have not found the verses. Colonel Edward Marcus Despard, after a career that began brilliantly, was imprisoned in the spring of 1798, and executed for High Treason in 1803.

The rhymed passage from *John Woodvil* is that which is best known. Hazlitt relates that Godwin was so taken with it when he first read it that he asked every one he met to tell him the author and play, and at last applied to Lamb himself.]

47. TO ROBERT SOUTHEY

March 15th, 1799.

DEAR SOUTHEY,

I have received your little volume, for which I thank you, though I do not entirely approve of this sort of intercourse, where the presents are all one side. I have read the last Eclogue again with great pleasure. It hath gained considerably by abridgment, and now I think it wants nothing but enlargement. You will call this one of tyrant Procrustes' criticisms, to cut and pull so to his own standard; but the old lady is so great a favourite with me, I want to hear more of her; and of 'Joanna' you have given us still less. But the picture of the rustics leaning over the bridge, and the old lady travelling abroad on a summer evening to see her garden watered, are images so new and true, that I decidedly prefer this 'Ruin'd Cottage' to any poem in the book. Indeed I think it the only one that will bear comparison with your 'Hymn to the Penates' in a former volume.

I compare dissimilar things, as one would a rose and a star, for the pleasure they give us, or as a child soon learns to choose between a cake and a rattle; for dissimilars have mostly some points of comparison. The next best poem, I think, is the First Eclogue; 'tis very complete, and abounding in little pictures and realities. The remainder Eclogues, excepting only the 'Funeral,' I do not greatly admire. I miss *one*, which had at least as good a title to publication as the 'Witch,' or the 'Sailor's Mother.' You call'd it the 'Last of the Family.' The 'Old Woman of Berkeley' comes next; in some humours I would give it the preference above any. But who the devil is Matthew of West-

minster? You are as familiar with these antiquated monastics, as Swedenborg, or, as his followers affect to call him, the Baron, with his invisibles. But you have raised a very comic effect out of the true narrative of Matthew of Westminster. 'Tis surprising with how little addition you have been able to convert with so little alteration his incidents, meant for terror, into circumstances and food for the spleen. The Parody is *not* so successful; it has one famous line indeed, which conveys the finest death-bed image I ever met with:

The doctor whisper'd the nurse, and the surgeon knew what he said.

But the offering the bride three times bears not the slightest analogy or proportion to the fiendish noises three times heard! In 'Jaspar,' the circumstance of the great light is very affecting. But I had heard you mention it before. The 'Rose' is the only insipid piece in the volume; it hath neither thorns nor sweetness, and, besides, sets all chronology and probability at defiance.

'Cousin Margaret,' you know, I like. The allusions to the 'Pilgrim's Progress' are particularly happy, and harmonise tacitly and delicately with old cousins and aunts. To familiar faces we do associate familiar scenes and accustomed objects; but what hath Apollidon and his sea-nymphs to do in these affairs? Apollyon I could have borne, though he stands for the devil; but who is Apollidon? I think you are too apt to conclude faintly, with some cold moral, as in the end of the poem called 'The Victory'—

Be thou her comforter, who art the widow's friend;

a single common-place line of comfort, which bears no proportion in weight or number to the many lines which describe suffering. This is to convert religion into mediocre feelings, which should burn, and glow, and tremble. A moral should be wrought into the body and soul, the matter and tendency, of a poem, not tagged to the end, like a 'God send the good ship into harbour,' at the conclusion of our bills of lading. The finishing of the 'Sailor' is also imperfect. Any dissenting minister may say and do as much.

These remarks, I know, are crude and unwrought; but I do not lay claim to much accurate thinking. I never judge system-wise of things, but fasten upon particulars. After all, there is a great

deal in the book that I must, for time, leave *unmentioned*, to deserve my thanks for its own sake, as well as for the friendly remembrances implied in the gift. I again return you my thanks.

Pray present my love to Edith.

C. L.

[Southey's little volume was vol. ii of the second edition of his *Poems*, published in 1799. The last of the English Eclogues included in it was *The Ruined Cottage*, slightly altered from the version referred to in Letter 38. The *Hymn to the Penates* brought the first volume of this edition to a close. The first Eclogue was *The Old Mansion House*. *The Old Woman of Berkeley* was called *A Ballad showing how an Old Woman rode double and who rode before her*. It was preceded by a long quotation in Latin from Matthew of Westminster. Matthew of Westminster is the imaginary name given to the unknown authors of a chronicle called *Flores Historiarum*, belonging probably to the fifteenth century. The Parody was *The Surgeon's Warning*, which begins with the two lines that Lamb prints as one:—

The Doctor whisper'd to the Nurse,
And the Surgeon knew what he said.

The Rose was blank verse, addressed to Edith Southey. *Cousin Margaret* was a 'Metrical Letter Written from London,' in which there are allusions to Bunyan. The reference to Apollidon is explained by these lines:

The Sylphs should waft us to some goodly isle,
Like that where whilome old Apollidon
Built up his blameless spell.]

48. TO ROBERT SOUTHEY

March 20th, 1799.

I am hugely pleased with your 'Spider,' 'your old freemason,' as you call him. The three first stanzas are delicious; they seem to me a compound of Burns and Old Quarles, those kind of home-strokes, where more is felt than strikes the ear; a terseness, a jocular pathos, which makes one feel in laughter. The measure, too, is novel and pleasing. I could almost wonder Rob. Burns in his lifetime never stumbled upon it. The fourth stanza is less striking, as being less original. The fifth falls off. It has no felicity of phrase, no old-fashioned phrase or feeling.

Young hopes, and love's delightful dreams, savour neither of Burns nor Quarles; they seem more like shreds of many a modern sentimental sonnet. The last stanza hath

nothing striking in it, if I except the two concluding lines, which are Burns all over. I wish, if you concur with me, these things could be looked to. I am sure this is a kind of writing, which comes tenfold better recommended to the heart, comes there more like a neighbour or familiar, than thousands of Hamuels and Zillahs and Madelons. I beg you will send me the 'Holly-tree,' if it at all resemble this, for it must please me. I have never seen it. I love this sort of poems, that open a new intercourse with the most despised of the animal and insect race. I think this vein may be further opened; Peter Pindar hath very prettily apostrophised a fly; Burns hath his mouse and his louse; Coleridge, less successfully, hath made overtures of intimacy to a jackass, therein only following at unressembling distance Sterne and greater Cervantes. Besides these, I know of no other examples of breaking down the partition between us and our 'poor earth-born companions.' It is sometimes revolting to be put in a track of feeling by other people, not one's own immediate thoughts, else I would persuade you, if I could (I am in earnest), to commence a series of these animal poems, which might have a tendency to rescue some poor creatures from the antipathy of mankind. Some thoughts come across me;—for instance—to a rat, to a toad, to a cockchafer, to a mole—People bake moles alive by a slow oven-fire to cure consumption. Rats are, indeed, the most despised and contemptible parts of God's earth. I killed a rat the other day by punching him to pieces, and feel a weight of blood upon me to this hour. Toads you know are made to fly, and tumble down and crush all to pieces. Cockchafers are old sport; then again to a worm, with an apostrophe to anglers, those patient tyrants, meek inflictors of pangs intolerable, cool devils; to an owl; to all snakes, with an apology for their poison; to a cat in boots or bladders. Your own fancy, if it takes a fancy to these hints, will suggest many more. A series of such poems, suppose them accompanied with plates descriptive of animal torments, cooks roasting lobsters, fishmongers crimping skates, &c., &c., would take excessively. I will willingly enter into a partnership in the plan with you: I think my heart and soul would go with it too—at least, give it a thought. My plan is but this minute come into my head; but it strikes me instantaneously as something new, good and useful, full of pleasure and full of

moral. If old Quarles and Wither could live again, we would invite them into our firm. Burns hath done his part. I the other day threw off an extempore epitaph on Ensign Peacock of the 3rd Regt. of the Royal East India Volunteers, who like other boys in this scarlet tainted age was ambitious of playing at soldiers, but dying in the first flash of his valour was at the particular instance of his relations buried with military honours! like any veteran scarr'd or chopt from Blenheim or Ramilies. (He was buried in sash and gorget.)

MARMOR LOQUITUR

Here lies a Volunteer so fine,
Who died of a decline,
As you or I may do one day;
Reader, think of this, I pray;
And I humbly hope you'll drop a tear
For my poor Royal Volunteer.
He was as brave as brave could be,
Nobody was so brave as he;
He would have died in Honor's bed,
Only he died at home instead.
Well may the Royal Regiment swear,
They never had such a Volunteer.
But whatsoever they may say,
Death is a man that will have his way:
Tho' he was but an ensign in this world of pain;
In the next we hope he'll be a captain.
And without meaning to make any reflection on his mentals,
He begg'd to be buried in regimentals.

Sed hæ sunt lamentabiles nugæ—But 'tis as good as some epitaphs you and I have read together in Christ-Church-yard.

Poor Sam. Le Grice! I am afraid the world, and the camp, and the university, have spoilt him among them. 'Tis certain he had at one time a strong capacity of turning out something better. I knew him, and that not long since, when he had a most warm heart. I am ashamed of the indifference I have sometimes felt towards him. I think the devil is in one's heart. I am under obligations to that man for the warmest friendship and heartiest sympathy, even for an agony of sympathy exprest both by word and deed, and tears for me, when I was in my greatest distress.

But I have forgot that! as, I fear, he has nigh forgot the awful scenes which were before his eyes when he served the office of a comforter to me. No service was too mean or troublesome for him to perform. I can't think what but the devil, 'that old spider,' could have suck'd my heart so dry of its sense of all gratitude. If he does come in your way, Southey, fail not to tell him that I retain a most affectionate remembrance of his old friendliness, and an earnest wish to resume our intercourse. In this I am serious. I cannot recommend him to your society, because I am afraid whether he be quite worthy of it. But I have no right to dismiss him from *my* regard. He was at one time, and in the worst of times, my own familiar friend, and great comfort to me then. I have known him to play at cards with my father, meal-times excepted, literally all day long, in long days too, to save me from being teased by the old man, when I was not able to bear it.

God bless him for it, and God bless you, Southey.

C. L.

[Hamuel and Zillah are in Southey's poem *The Rose*.

Peter Pindar (Dr. John Wolcot) has an ode *To a Fly, taken out of a Bowl of Punch*. He also wrote *The Lousiad*.

'Poor earth-born companions.' From Burns's *Lines to a Mouse*, second stanza, line 5.

'Toads are made to fly.' Filliping the toad was an old pastime. A toad was placed on one end of a piece of wood, laid crosswise over a stone. The other end was struck with a beetle (i.e. a mallet), and the toad flew into the air. Falstaff says: 'Fillip me with a three-man beetle.' As to worms and fishermen, the late Mrs. Coe, who as a girl had known Lamb at Widford, told me that he could rarely, if ever, be tempted to join the anglers. Affixing the worm was too much for him. 'Barbarous, barbarous,' he used to say.

'Sed hæ sunt lamentabiles nugæ': But these are sad trifles.

We met Sam Le Grice in the letter of 3rd October 1796. To what escapade Lamb refers I do not know, but as a youth he was addicted to folly. It was Sam Le Grice of whom Leigh Hunt in his *Autobiography* tells the excellent tale that he excused himself to his master for not having performed a task, by the remark that he had a 'lethargy.'

In April of this year Lamb's father died. Charles probably at once moved from 45 Chapel Street to No. 36, where Mary Lamb joined him.]

49. TO ROBERT SOUTHEY

[20th April 1799.]

The following is a second Extract from my Tragedy, that is to be as narrated by an old Steward to Margaret, Orphan Ward of Sir Walter Woodvil—This, and the Dying Lover I gave you, are the only Extracts I can give without mutilation. I expect you to like the old woman's curse:

Old Steward. One summer night, Sir Walter, as it chanc'd,
Was pacing to & fro in the avenue
That westward fronts our house,
Among those aged oaks, said to have been planted
Three hundred years ago
By a neighb'ring Prior of the Woodvil name,
But so it was,
Being overtask't in thought, he heeded not
The importune suitor who stood by the gate,
And beg'd an alms.
Some say he shov'd her rudely from the gate
With angry chiding; but I can never think
(Sir Walter's nature hath a sweetness in it)
That he would use a woman—an old woman—
With such discourtesy;
For old she was who beg'd an alms of him.
Well, he refus'd her;
Whether for importunity, I know not,
Or that she came between his meditations.
But better had he met a lion in the streets
Than this old woman that night;
For she was one who practis'd the black arts,
And served the devil—being since burn'd for witchcraft.
She look'd at him like one that meant to blast him,
And with a frightful noise
('Twas partly like a woman's voice,
And partly like the hissing of a snake)
She nothing said but this (Sir Walter told the words):

'A mischief, mischief, mischief,
And a nine-times killing curse,
By day and by night, to the caitive wight
Who shakes the poor like snakes from his door,
And shuts up the womb of his purse;

And a mischief, mischief, mischief,
 And a nine-fold withering curse,—
 For that shall come to thee, that will undo thee
 Both all that thou fear'st, and worse.'

These words four times repeated, she departed,
 Leaving Sir Walter like a man beneath
 Whose feet a scaffolding had suddenly fal'n:
 So he describ'd it.

Margaret. A terrible curse!

Old Steward. O Lady, such bad things are told of that old woman,
 As, namely, that the milk she gave was sour,
 And the babe who suck'd her shrivel'd like a mandrake;
 And things besides, with a bigger horror in them,
 Almost, I think, unlawful to be told!

Margaret. Then must I never hear them. But proceed,
 And say what follow'd on the witch's curse.

Old Steward. Nothing immediate; but some nine months after,
 Young Stephen Woodvil suddenly fell sick,
 And none could tell what ail'd him: for he lay,
 And pin'd, and pin'd, that all his hair came off;
 And he, that was full-flesh'd, became as thin
 As a two-months' babe that hath been starved in the nursing;—
 And sure, I think,
 He bore his illness like a little child,
 With such rare sweetness of dumb melancholy
 He strove to clothe his agony in smiles,
 Which he would force up in his poor, pale cheeks,
 Like ill-tim'd guests that had no proper business there;—
 And when they ask'd him his complaint, he laid
 His hand upon his heart to show the place
 Where Satan came to him a nights, he said,
 And prick'd him with a pin.—
 And hereupon Sir Walter call'd to mind
 The Beggar Witch that stood in the gateway,
 And begg'd an alms—

Margaret. I do not love to credit Tales of magic.
 Heav'n's music, which is order, seems unstrung;
 And this brave world,
 Creation's beauteous work, unbeautified,
 Disorder'd, marr'd, where such strange things are acted.

This is the Extract I brag'd of, as superior to that I sent
 you from Marlow—perhaps you smile, but I should like your
 remarks on the above, as you are deeper witch-read than I.

[The passage quoted in this letter, with certain alterations, became afterwards *The Witch*, a dramatic sketch independent of *John Woodvil*. By the phrase 'without mutilation,' Lamb possibly means to suggest that Southey should print this sketch and *The Dying Lover* in the *Annual Anthology*. That was not, however, done. *The Witch* was first printed in the *Works*, 1818.]

50. TO ROBERT LLOYD

[No date: ? August 1799.]

MY DEAR ROBERT,

I acknowledge I have been sadly remiss of late. If I descend to any excuse (and all excuses that come short of a direct denial of a charge are poor creatures at best), it must be taken from my state of mind for some time past, which has been stupid rather, and unfilled with any object, than occupied, as you may imagine, with any favourite idea to the exclusion of friend Robert. You, who are subject to all the varieties of the mind, will give me credit in this.

I am sadly sorry that you are relapsing into your old complaining strain. I wish I could adapt my consolations to your disease, but, alas! I have none to offer which your own mind, and the suggestions of books, cannot better supply. Are you the first whose situation hath not been exactly squar'd to his ideas? or rather, will you find me that man who does not complain of the one thing wanting? That thing obtained, another wish will start up. While this eternal craving of the mind keeps up its eternal hunger, no feast that my palate knows of will satisfy that hunger till we come to drink the new wine (whatever it be) in the Kingdom of the Father. See what trifles disquiet us.—You are Unhappy because your Parents expect you to attend meetings. I don't know much of Quakers' meetings, but I believe I may moderately reckon them to take up the space of six hours in the week. Six hours to please your parents—and that time not absolutely lost. Your mind remains, you may think, and plan, remember, and foresee, and do all human acts of mind sitting as well as walking. You are quiet at meeting: one likes to be so sometimes; you may advantageously crowd your day's devotions into that space. Nothing you see or hear there can be unfavourable to it—you are for that time at least

exempt from the counting-house, and your parents cannot chide you there; surely at so small expense you cannot grudge to observe the Fifth Commandment. I decidedly consider your refusal as a breach of that God-descended precept—Honour and observe thy parents in all lawful things. Silent worship cannot be *Unlawful*; there is no Idolatry, no invocation of saints, no bowing before the consecrated wafer in all this, nothing which a wise man would refuse, or a good man fear to do. What is it? Sitting a few hours in a week with certain good people who call *that* worship. You subscribe to no articles—if your mind wanders, it is no crime in you who do not give credit to these infusions of the spirit. They sit in a temple, you sit as in a room adjoining, only do not disturb their pious work with gabbling, nor your own necessary peace with heart-burnings at your not ill-meaning parents, nor a silly contempt of the work which is going on before you. I know that if my parents were to live again, I would do more things to please them than merely sitting still six hours in a week. Perhaps I enlarge too much on this affair, but indeed your objection seems to me ridiculous, and involving in it a principle of frivolous and vexatious resistance.

You have often borne with my freedoms, bear with me once more in this. If I did not love you, I should not trouble myself whether you went to meeting or not—whether you conform'd or not [to] the will of your father.

I am now called off to dinner before one o'clock; being a holyday we dine early, for Mary and me to have a long walk afterwards. My kindest remembrance to Charles.

God give him all joy and quiet.

Mary sends her LOVE.

C. L.

51. TO ROBERT LLOYD

[No date: *October 1799.*]

MY DEAR ROBERT,

I suppose by this time you have returned from Worcester with Uncle Nehemiah. You neglected to inform me whether Charles is yet at Birm. I have heard here that he is returned to

Cambridge. Give him a gentle tap on the shoulder to remind him how truly acceptable a letter from him would be. I have nothing to write about.

Thomson remains with me. He is perpetually getting into mental vagaries. He is in LOVE! and tosses and tumbles about in his bed like a man in a barrel of spikes. He is more sociable, but I am heartily sick of his domesticating with me; he wants so many sympathies of mine, and I want his, that we are daily declining into *civility*. I shall be truly glad when he is gone. I find 'tis a dangerous experiment to grow too familiar. Some natures cannot bear it without converting into indifference. I know but one Being that I could ever consent to live perpetually with, and that is Robert. But Robert must go whither prudence and paternal regulations indicate a way. I shall not soon forget you—do not fear that—nor grow cool towards Robert. My not writing is no proof of these disloyalties. Perhaps I am unwell, or vexed, or spleen'd, or something, when I should otherwise write.

Assure Charles of my unalterable affections, and present my warmest wishes for his and Sophia's happiness. How goes on Priscilla? I am much pleased with his Poems in the Anthology—One in Particular. The other is a kind and no doubt just tribute to Robert and Olivia, but I incline to opinion that these domestic addresses should not always be made public. I have, I know, more than once exposed my own secretest feelings of that nature, but I am sorry that I did. Nine out of ten readers laugh at them. When a man dies leaving the name of a great author behind him, any unpublished relicks which let one into his domestic retirements are greedily gathered up, which in his lifetime, and before his fame had ripened, would by many be considered as impertinent. But if Robert and his sister were gratify'd with seeing their brother's heart in Print, let the rest of the world go hang. They may prefer the remaining trumpery of the Anthology. All I mean to say is, I think I perceive an indelicacy in thus exposing one's virtuous feelings to criticism. But of delicacy Charles is at least as true a judge as myself.

Pray request him to let me somehow have a sight of his novel. I declined offering it here for sale, for good reasons as I thought—being unknown to Booksellers, and not made for making

bargains; but for that reason I am not to be punished with not seeing the book.

I shall count it a kindness if Chas. will send me the manuscript, which shall certainly be returned.

[*The remainder of this letter has been torn off.*]

[Thomson was Marmaduke Thompson, to whom *Rosamund Gray* had been dedicated.

Charles Lloyd had just married Sophia Pemberton with a dowry of £10,000, and an allowance from his father of £200 a year.

'A sight of his novel.' As it seems incredible that Lamb should not yet have seen *Edmund Oliver*, which was published in 1798, and had led to some of Coleridge's resentment, we must suppose that the reference is to another novel by Lloyd called *Isabel*, which was probably written then but was not published till 1820.]

52. TO ROBERT SOUTHEY

Oct. 31st, 1799.

DEAR SOUTHEY,

I have but just got your letter, being returned from Herts, where I have passed a few red-letter days with much pleasure. I would describe the county to you, as you have done by Devonshire, but alas! I am a poor pen at that same. I could tell you of an old house with a tapestry bed-room, the 'judgment of Solomon' composing one pannel, and 'Actæon spying Diana naked' the other. I could tell of an old marble hall, with Hogarth's prints and the Roman Cæsars in marble hung round. I could tell of a *wilderness*, and of a village church, and where the bones of my honoured grandam lie; but there are feelings which refuse to be translated, sulky aborigines, which will not be naturalized in another soil. Of this nature are old family faces and scenes of infancy.

I have given your address, and the books you want, to the Arches; they will send them as soon as they can get them, but they do not seem quite familiar to [?] with] their names. I have seen Gebor! Gebor aptly so denominated from Geborish, *quasi* Gibberish. But Gebor hath some lucid intervals. I remember darkly one beautiful simile veiled in uncouth phrases about the youngest daughter of the Ark. I shall have nothing to

communicate, I fear, to the Anthology. You shall have some fragments of my play, if you desire them, but I think I would rather print it whole. Have you seen it, or shall I lend you a copy? I want your opinion of it.

I must get to business, so farewell. My kind remembrances to Edith. C. LAMB.

[Lamb had probably been staying at Widford. Many years later he described in more than one essay his Hertfordshire days (see the *Elia* essays 'Mackery End' and 'Blakesmoor in H—shire' and 'Dream-Children'). The old house was, of course, Blakesware. The wilderness, which lay at the back of the house, is, with Widford, mentioned in *Rosamund Gray*.

The Arches were the brothers Arch, the booksellers of Ludgate Hill.

Gebor stands for *Gebir*, Landor's poem, published in 1798. The simile in question would be this: from Book VII, lines 248–51:

Never so eager, when the world was waves,
Stood the less daughter of the ark, and tried
(Innocent this temptation) to recall
With folded vest and casting arm the dove.

The reference to Southey's *Anthology* is to vol. ii, then in preparation. *John Woodvil* was now finished: it circulated in manuscript before being published in 1802.]

53. TO CHARLES LLOYD

DEAR LLOYD, [No date: Between 10th and 14th December 1799.]

I make it my particular request, that you will immediately transmit me your copy of my Play.—I promise religiously to restore it some time again. I want it particularly, as I am liable every day to be called upon for a copy.—Sophia will pack it up I know if you will ask her. I have presented my copy to Kemble.—I left it at his house yesterday morning, before he was up, with no other introduction but an anonymous note, requesting his opinion, but having taken the precaution to write my name and address in a blank leaf, was surprised in the evening with a letter from Kemble, in very handsome terms declining to determine upon it, as not being in his province, but offering 'with great pleasure to put my play into the hands of the Proprietors of Drury Lane Theatre, and hoping that it may succeed with them

to Mr. Lamb's wishes.'—This from a perfect stranger who never saw me, and the very day in which I had so awkwardly and improperly intruded it upon him, was most handsome and gentlemanlike, and I confess, has revived in me some antiquated pretensions—[*word erased*]. It is evident he has read it with some approbation, of a voluntary offer to present it for me. . . . So you will see the necessity of my having another copy fairly written in the house, which I have not, only a rough draught.—I will certainly some day replace yours . . . but pray send it directly—I purpose calling upon Kemble, whom I have not yet seen, tomorrow morning.—I am not very sanguine, but the profits of acting plays are so large nowadays, that a very shadow of a hope ought to make me glad.—Direct it to India House—I have just learned that Coleridge has taken lodgings with his family in the Adelphi—but I have seen nothing of him—

Pray present my love to Sophia, and bid Manning write, when you send my parcel—And respects to your father if he is in Cam . . .

Yours truly,

C. L.

Mr. Charles Lloyd, Jun.,

Mr. Styles's, Jesus Lane, Cambridge.

[Mrs. Anderson's note: 'This letter is dated (1) by the arrival of Coleridge's family at 21 Buckingham Street "before Dec. 9th" (see Dykes Campbell's *Life of S. T. C.*) and (2) by Manning's first letter to Lamb dated 15th December. Lamb must have visited Lloyd quite at the beginning of December, if not earlier. Probably the first week, since Mr. Lloyd senior wrote from London to Robert & Thomas on 5th December that "C. Lamb was gone to Cambridge." So Lamb's first letter to Manning must have been about 8th December, a day or two before he wrote to Lloyd. Apparently old Mr. Lloyd paid a short visit to Cambridge, shortly after Lamb's return, and then came back to London, since Lamb dined with him a few days before 17th December & breakfasted with him on the 18th.'

I would add to this that the present letter is the only one from Lamb to Charles Lloyd that has been preserved or discovered and that it is notable in mentioning for the first time the name of Thomas Manning, who for the next few years was to be the most considerable influence in Lamb's life, and to draw from him those stores of fun which until this time were almost hidden.

The Kemble to whom *Pride's Cure* or *John Woodvil* was submitted was John Philip Kemble.]

54. TO THOMAS MANNING

Dec., 1799.

DEAR MANNING,

The particular kindness, even up to a degree of attachment, which I have experienced from you, seems to claim some distinct acknowledgment on my part. I could not content myself with a bare remembrance to you, conveyed in some letter to Lloyd.

Will it be agreeable to you, if I occasionally recruit your memory of me, which must else soon fade, if you consider the brief intercourse we have had? I am not likely to prove a troublesome correspondent. My scribbling days are past. I shall have no sentiments to communicate, but as they spring up from some living and worthy occasion.

I look forward with great pleasure to the performance of your promise, that we should meet in London early in the ensuing year. The century must needs commence auspiciously for me, that brings with it Manning's friendship as an earnest of its after gifts.

I should have written before, but for a troublesome inflammation in one of my eyes, brought on by night travelling with the coach windows sometimes up.

What more I have to say shall be reserved for a letter to Lloyd. I must not prove tedious to you in my first outset, lest I should affright you by my ill-judged loquacity.

I am, yours most sincerely,

C. LAMB.

[This is the first letter in the correspondence between Lamb and Manning. Lamb had met Manning at Cambridge late in 1799, when on a visit to Charles Lloyd. Much of Manning's history will be unfolded as the letters proceed, but here it should be stated that he was born on 8th November 1772, and was thus a little more than two years older than Lamb. He was at this time acting as private tutor in mathematics at Cambridge, among his pupils being Charles Lloyd, of Caius, Manning's own college. Manning, however, did not take his degree, owing to an objection to oaths and tests.

Lamb's reference to the beginning of the century shows that he shared with many other non-mathematically-minded persons the belief that the century begins with the hundredth, and not the hundred and first, year. He says of Manning, in the *Elia* essay 'The Old and the New Schoolmaster': 'My friend M., with great painstaking, got me to think I understood the first proposition in Euclid, but gave me over in despair at the second.'

In his reply to this letter, printed in *The Letters of Thomas Manning to Charles Lamb*, edited by Mrs. Anderson, 1925, Manning says:

I had some conversation the other day with Sophia concerning your Tragedy; & she made some very sensible observations (as I thought) with respect to the unfitness of its title [*Pride's Cure*]. The Folly, whose consequences humble the Pride & ambition of John's heart, does not originate in the working of *those* passions, but from an underpart in his character, & as it were accidentally, viz. from the ebullitions of a drunken mind & from a rash confidence. You will understand what I mean, without my explaining myself any further. God bless You,—& keep you from all evil things, that walk upon the face of the Earth—I mean Night-mares, Hobgoblins, & Spectres.]

55. TO ROBERT LLOYD

Dec. 17, 1799.

DEAR ROB,

Thy presents will be most acceptable whenever they come, both for thy sake and for the liquor, which is a beverage I most admire. Wine makes me hot, and brandy makes me drunk, but porter warms without intoxication; and elevates, yet not too much above the point of tranquillity. But I hope Robert will come himself before the tap is out. He may be assured that his good honest company is the most valuable present, after all, he can make us. These cold nights crave something beside Porter—good English mirth and heart's ease. Rob must contrive to pass some of his Christmas with us, or at least drink in the century with a welcome.

I have not seen your father or Priscilla since. Your father was in one of his best humours (I have seldom seen him in one not good), and after dinner, while we were sitting comfortably before the parlour fire, after our wine, he beckoned me suddenly out of the room. I, expecting some secrets, followed him, but it was only to go and sit with him in the old forsaken counting house, which he declared to be the pleasantest spot in the house to him, and told me how much business used to be done there in former days. Your father whimsically mixes the good man and the man of business in his manners, but he is not less a good man for being a man of business. He has conceived great hopes of thy one day uniting both characters, and I joyfully expect the same.

I hope to see Priscilla, for the first time, some day the end of this week, but think it at least dubious, as she stays in town but one day, I think your father said.

I wonder Rob could think I should take his presents in evil part. I am sure from him they are the genuine result of a sincere friendship, not immediately knowing how better to express itself. I shall enjoy them with tenfold gust, as being his presents. At the same time, I must remind him that such expressions, if too thickly repeated, would be in danger of proving oppressive.

I am not fond of presents all on one side, and Rob knows that I have little to present to him, except the assurances of an undiminished and an undiminishable friendship. Rob will take as a hint what his friend does not mean as an affront. I hope our friendship will stand firm, without the help of scaffolding.

At the same time I am determined to enjoy Robert's present, and to drink his health in his own porter, and I hope he will be able to partake with us. Bread and cheese and a hearty sympathy may prove no bad supplement to Robert's good old English beverage. Charles has not written to me since I saw him. I trust he goes on as comfortably as I witness'd. No husband and wife can be happier than Sophia and your Brother appear to be in each other's company. Robert must marry next; I look to see him get the start of Wordsworth and Priscilla, whom *yet* I wish to see united.

Farewell, dearest Rob,

C. L.

Mary joins with me in remembrances to Robert, and in expectation of the coming beverage.

Do you think you shall be able to come?

Monday night, just Porter time.

[Charles Lloyd, Senior, had, I suppose, entertained Lamb at the London office of his Birmingham bank.]

56. TO THOMAS MANNING

Dec. 28th, 1799.

DEAR MANNING,

Having suspended my correspondence a decent interval, as knowing that even good things may be taken to satiety, a wish

cannot but recur to learn whether you be still well and happy. Do all things continue in the state I left them in Cambridge?

Do your night parties still flourish? and do you continue to bewilder your company with your thousand faces running down through all the keys of idiotism (like Lloyd over his perpetual harpsicord), from the smile and the glimmer of half-sense and quarter-sense to the grin and hanging lip of Betty Foy's own Johnny? And does the face-dissolving curfew sound at twelve? How unlike the great originals were your petty terrors in the postscript, not fearful enough to make a fairy shudder, or a lilliputian fine lady, eight months full of child, miscarry.

Yet one of them, which had more beast than the rest, I thought faintly resembled *one* of your brutifications.

But, seriously, I long to see your own honest Manning-face again. I did not mean a pun,—your *man's* face, you will be apt to say, I know your wicked will to pun. I cannot now write to Lloyd and you too, so you must convey as much interesting intelligence as this may contain, or be thought to contain, to him and Sophia, with my dearest love and remembrances.

By the bye, I think you and Sophia both incorrect with regard to the *title* of the *play*. Allowing your objection (which is not necessary, as pride may be, and is in real life often, cured by misfortunes not directly originating from its own acts, as Jeremy Taylor will tell you a naughty desire is sometimes sent to cure it—I know you read these *practical divines*). But allowing your objection, does not the betraying of his father's secret directly spring from pride?—from the pride of wine and a full heart, and a proud over-stepping of the ordinary rules of morality, and contempt of the prejudices of mankind, which are not to bind superior souls—‘as *trust in the matter of secrets all ties of blood, &c., &c., keeping of promises, the feeble mind's religion, binding our morning knowledge to the performance of what last night's ignorance spake*’—does he not prate, that ‘*Great Spirits*’ must do more than die for their friend—does not the pride of wine incite him to display some evidence of friendship, which its own irregularity shall make great?

This I know, that I meant his punishment not alone to be a cure for his daily and habitual *pride*, but the direct consequence and appropriate punishment of a particular act of pride.

If you do not understand it so, it is my fault in not explaining my meaning.

I have not seen Coleridge since, and scarcely expect to see him, —perhaps he has been at Cambridge. I dined with him in town and breakfasted with him and Priscilla, who you may tell Charles has promised to come and see me when she returns [to] Clapham. I will write to Charles on Monday.

Need I turn over to blot a fresh clean half-sheet? merely to say, what I hope you are sure of without my repeating it, that I would have you consider me, dear Manning, Your sincere friend,

C. LAMB.

What is your *proper address*?

['Betty Foy's own Johnny'—*The Idiot Boy* in the *Lyrical Ballads*.

'In the postscript.' A reference to some drawings of queer beasts in Manning's previous letter.

Lamb refers in this letter particularly to Act III of his play.

'I have not seen Coleridge since.' Since when is not clear.

The italics in the postscript are explained by Lamb's superscription: 'Mr. Thomas Manning, near St. Mary's Church, Cambridge.'

This letter contains the first reference to Coleridge as once more an intimate friend. Coleridge, having returned from Germany, was in London, busy with his translation of Schiller's *Wallenstein*, one of the songs in which Lamb lyricized for him from a prose version.]

57. TO S. T. COLERIDGE

? Jan. 23, 1800.

DEAR COLERIDGE,

Now I write, I cannot miss this opportunity of acknowledging the obligations myself, and the readers in general of that luminous paper, the 'Morning Post,' are under to you for the very novel and exquisite manner in which you combined political with grammatical science, in your yesterday's dissertation on Mr. Wyndham's unhappy composition. It must have been the death-blow to that ministry. I expect Pitt and Grenville to resign. More especially the delicate and Cottrellian grace with which you officiated, with a ferula for a white wand, as gentleman usher to the word 'also,' which it seems did not know its place.

I expect Manning of Cambridge in town to-night—will you

fulfil your promise of meeting him at my house? He is a man of a thousand. Give me a line to say what day, whether Saturday, Sunday, Monday, &c., and if Sara and the Philosopher can come. I am afraid if I did not at intervals call upon you, I should *never see you*. But I forget, the affairs of the nation engross your time and your mind.

Farewell.

C. L.

[The first letter that has been preserved of the second period of Lamb's correspondence with Coleridge, which was to last intermittently until the end.

In the *Morning Post* of 7th January 1800, had appeared the correspondence between Buonaparte and Lord Grenville, in which Buonaparte made an offer of peace. Lord Grenville's Note, it was pointed out in the *Morning Post* for 16th January, was really written by William Windham, Secretary for War, and on 22nd January appeared an article closely criticizing its grammar.

Here is the passage concerning 'also,' to which Lamb particularly alludes a little later in the letter:

. . . 'The *same* system, to the prevalence of which France justly ascribes all her present miseries, is that which has *also* involved the rest of Europe in a long and destructive warfare, of a nature long since unknown to the practice of civilized nations.' Here the connective word 'also' should have followed the word 'Europe.' As it at present stands, the sentence implies that France, miserable as she may be, has, however, not been involved in a warfare. The word 'same' is absolutely expletive; and by appearing to refer the reader to some foregoing clause, it not only loads the sentence, but renders it obscure. The word 'to' is absurdly used for the word 'in.' A thing may be unknown to practitioners, as humanity and sincerity may be unknown to the practitioners of State-craft, and foresight, science, and harmony may have been unknown to the planners and practitioners of Continental Expeditions; but even 'cheese-parings and candle-ends' cannot be known or unknown 'to' a practice!!

Windham was destined to be attacked by another stalwart in Lamb's circle, for it was his speech in opposition to Lord Erskine's Cruelty to Animals Bill in 1809 that inspired John Lamb to write his fierce pamphlet (see later).

'Cortrellian grace.' The Cortrells were Masters of the Ceremonies from 1641 to 1808.

The Philosopher was David Hartley Coleridge, aged three, so called after his great namesake, David Hartley. The Coleridges were now, as we have seen, living at 21 Buckingham Street, Strand.

Mrs. Anderson's note: 'Manning stayed three days at Lamb's & then apparently at 25 Cecil Street, Strand: to which address Sophia Lloyd wrote to him on 26th January & Charles Lloyd on the 29th. They took care of Manning's dog Presto during his absence. Manning was evidently dazzled by Coleridge on their first meeting, as can be gathered by Sophia's letter, which was a reply to one from Manning.'

In the next letter we come upon further indiscretions of Charles Lloyd; which might well be forgotten, but I do not feel entitled to omit any of the correspondence.

Mary Hayes, or Hays, was a friend of Mary Wollstonecraft, and also of Southey and Coleridge. She wrote a novel, *Memoirs of Emma Courtney*, which Lloyd says contained her own love letters to Godwin and Friend, and also *Female Biography, or Memoirs of Illustrious and Celebrated Women*. Lloyd and she had been very friendly. A passage from a letter of Coleridge to Southey, dated 25th January 1800, bears upon the present situation: 'Miss Hayes I have seen. Charles Lloyd's conduct has been atrocious beyond what you stated. Lamb himself confessed to me that during the time in which he kept up his ranting, sentimental correspondence with Miss Hayes, he frequently read her letters in company, as a subject for *laughter*, and then sate down and answered them quite à la Rousseau! Poor Lloyd! Every hour new-creates him; he is his own posterity in a perpetually flowing series, and his body unfortunately retaining an external identity, *their* mutual contradictions and disagreements are united under one name, and of course are called lies, treachery, and rascality!']

58. TO THOMAS MANNING

[P.M. 8th February 1800.]

Saturday.

The Turkey is just come—the largest I ever saw—

Lloyd's letter to Miss Hays I look upon to be a most curious specimen of the apologetic style. How a man could write such a letter to a woman, and dream that there was in it any tendency to sooth or conciliate, from no analogous operations in my own wrong Brain can I explain.—'Mary Hays, I said that I believed that you were in love with me.'—'I had heard several times repeated, that you had loved both Godwin and Friend, moreover I had heard several times repeated, that all your first novel was but a transcript of letters sent by yourself to the latter Gentleman. I have been told this so often, that it seems to my mind like a general report. I have heard it in all places.' 'Dr. Reid & I were laughing in the wantonness in which our sex too often indulges at the consequence of your theories, & I most wickedly'—(In God's name, how came he & the Dr. so graciously familiar, just after he had discover'd the Dr's complete worthlessness & wickedness?—) 'I most *wickedly* exprest myself as if I thought you would in conduct demonstrate all that you proposed in specu-

lation! I did not say this grossly' (Wheugh! Wheugh! What a delicate invention, how to call a woman a whore, and not be indictable in the Spiritual courts!—) 'In the confounding medley of ordinary conversation, I have interwoven my abhorrence of your principles with a glanced contempt for your personal character. "But" in spite of all these inconsistencies I am your friend, & for the future, if we maintain our intercourse, will prove to you by conduct, how severely I condemn the past.' . . . C. Lloyd must have a damned 'spite to inconsistencies,' if he can reconcile this language to the ordinary meaning of the term apology. . . . Now, Manning, seriously what do you think of this letter? does it appear that Coleridge has added one jot to what Miss Hays might fairly represent from Lloyd's own confession?—You doubt, whether Southey ever express himself so strongly on this subject. I suppose you refer to Coleridge's account of him. I can tell you, that Southey did express himself in very harsh terms of Lloyd's conduct, when he was last in town. He came fresh from Miss Hays, who had given him all the story, as I find she tells everybody! and told Southey that she despised Lloyd. I am not sure, that Southey was not in a humour, after this representation, to say all that Coleridge declared he did say. Particularly, if he saw this Letter, which I believe he did. Now, do not imagine, that Col. has prejudiced my mind in this *at all*,—the truth is, I write from my own single judgment, and when I shewed the Letter to Coleridge, he read it in silence, or only once muttered the word 'indelicate.' But I should not have been easy in concealing my true sentiment from you. My whole moral sense is up in arms against the Letter. To my apprehension, it is shockingly & nauseously indelicate, and I perceive an aggravation or multiplication of the Indelicacy, in Lloyd's getting his sister Olivia to transcribe it. An ignorant Quaker girl, I mean ignorant in the best sense, who ought not to know, that such a thing was possible or in *rerum natura*, that a woman should court a man. . . . And a dear sister, who least of all should apprehend such an omen! realiz'd in her own Brother. Manning, do not misapprehend me, I would not say so much to Lloyd's own self, for this plain reason, that I should [not] be able to convince him, and I would not [cause] unnecessary pain—Yet as much of this, as your discretion & tenderness will give leave,

you have my full leave to shew him. . . . But I COULD not let you remain ignorant of so big a part of my nature, as now rises up against this illjudged Letter, particularly as I am doubtful, whether you may not see it in a quite different light. . . . So much for Lloyd's amours with Mary Hays, which would not form an unentertaining romance. From this time, they are no concern of mine. I will sum up the controversy in the words of Coleridge, all he has since said to me, 'Miss Hayes has acted like a fool, & Charles Lloyd not very wisely.'—

I cannot but smile at Lloyd's beginning to find out, that Col. can tell lyes. He brings a serious charge against him—that he told Caldwell he had no engagements with the Newspapers! As long as Lloyd or I have known Col. so long have we known him in the daily & hourly habit of quizzing the world by lyes, most unaccountable & most disinterested fictions. With a correct knowledge of these inaccuracies on both sides, I am still desirous of keeping on kind terms with Lloyd, and I am to sup with Coleridge tonight—Godwin will be there, whom I am rather curious to see—& Col. to partake with me of Manning's Bounty tomorrow. By the way, I am anxious to get specimens of all English Turkeys. Pray, send me at your Leisure separate Specimens from every County in Great Britain, including Wales, as I hate nationalities. The Irish Turkeys I will let alone, till the Union is determined.—To sum up my inferences from the above facts, I am determined to live a merry Life in the midst of Sinners. I try to consider all men as such, and to pitch my expectations from human nature as low as possible. In this view, all unexpected virtues are God-sends & beautiful exceptions. Only let young Love beware, when he sets out in his progress thro' Life, how he forms erroneous conceptions of finding all saints! To conclude, the Blessing of St. Peter's master rest upon you & all honest anglers.

C. LAMB.

Coleridge has conceived a most high (Quaere if just) opinion of you, most illustrious Archimedes. Philosopher Godwin dines with me on your Turkey this day.—I expect the roof to fall & crush the Atheist. I have been drunk two nights running at Coleridge's—how my Head burns!

[Manning's reply, in full, may be read in Mrs. Anderson's book. The concluding passage runs thus:

What business has Miss H. to go about exhibiting a private correspondence of this kind? L. does not go round to his friends & acquaintance babbling forth her follies—he never *did*, & he never *does*.—If he did employ his sister to transcribe the letter, we ought to consider who Olivia is,—not a tattling pert minx, but a good girl, that would copy the letter at her Brother's request & think no more about the matter. As to Southey's implication in the business—it is sufficient to state Southey now corresponds with L. as a friend—whoever deems Southey a man of character & integrity is satisfied by this that he does not consider L. as a guilty man—however erroneous & faulty he may have judged his conduct—and this, whatever sentences S. may have uttered. You know, Lamb, from the expressions I used at your house, my conviction of L.'s integrity, & my respect for his character—and I know that when you ask your heart & head What sort of man is L? your answer agrees with mine. But you also know that there is not that complete identity of sympathy between me & L. as to make me blind to his faults. Moreover, I have that coolness & mathematical precision that render me as difficult to be imposed upon as one of brighter intellect or (if that be possible) stronger judgment. Well! I have considered this affair fully & I do lay my hand upon my heart & say that L.'s conduct in it (tho' erroneous *I think*) has been such as to produce in me towards him no diminution of respect of honour or of Love. That you may entertain similar sentiments is the wish of

Your very affectionate Friend,

T. M.

For fuller particulars about Mary Hays the reader is referred to *Love Letters of Mary Hays*, by A. F. Wedd, 1925.

William Frend (1757–1841), the mathematician and Unitarian, who had been prosecuted in the Vice-Chancellor's Court at Cambridge for a tract entitled *Peace and Union Recommended to the Associated Bodies of Republicans and Anti-Republicans*, in which he attacked much of the Liturgy of the Church of England. He was found guilty and banished from the University of Cambridge. He had been a friend of Robert Robinson, whose life Dyer wrote, and remained a friend of Dyer to the end of his life. Coleridge had been among the undergraduates who applauded Frend at his trial.

Caldwell was a fellow-undergraduate of S. T. C.'s at Jesus College. He was afterwards the Rev. George Caldwell, Fellow and Tutor of Jesus College, and his name is on the list of subscribers to the *Friend*.

The postscript would seem to have been written on the following day, Godwin having made such a good impression on Lamb at Coleridge's as to be invited at once to dinner. Henceforward for several years he was one of the circle.]

59. TO THOMAS MANNING

[P.M. 13th February 1800.]

DEAR MANNING,

Olivia is a good girl, and if you turn to my letter, you will find that this very plea you set up to vindicate Lloyd I had made use of as a reason why he should never have employed Olivia to make a copy of such a letter—a letter I could not have sent to my enemy's bitch, if she had thought fit to seek me in the way of marriage. But you see it in one view, I in another. Rest you merry in your opinion! Opinion is a species of property; and though I am always desirous to share with my friend to a certain extent, I shall ever like to keep some tenets and some property properly my own. Some day, Manning, when we meet, substituting Corydon and fair Amaryllis, for Charles Lloyd and Mary Hayes, we will discuss together this question of moral feeling, 'In what cases and how far sincerity is a virtue?' I do not mean Truth—a good Olivia-like creature—God bless her, who, meaning no offence, is always ready to give an answer when she is asked why she did so and so; but a certain forward-talking half-brother of hers, Sincerity, that amphibious gentleman, who is so ready to perk up his obnoxious sentiments unasked into your notice, as Midas would his ears into your face uncalled for. But I despair of doing anything by a letter in the way of explaining or coming to explanations. A good wish, or a pun, or a piece of secret history, may be well enough that way conveyed; nay, it has been known that intelligence of a turkey hath been conveyed by that medium without much ambiguity. Godwin I am a good deal pleased with. He is a very well-behaved, decent man, nothing very brilliant about him, or imposing, as you may suppose; quite another guess sort of gentleman from what your Anti-Jacobin Christians imagine him. I was well pleased to find he has neither horns nor claws; quite a tame creature, I assure you. A middle-sized man, both in stature and in understanding; whereas, from his noisy fame, you would expect to find a Briareus Centimanus, or a Tityus tall enough to pull Jupiter from his heavens.

I begin to think you Atheists not quite so tall a species.

Coleridge inquires after you pretty often. I wish to be the Pandar to bring you together again once before I die. When we die, you and I must part; the sheep, you know, take the right hand, and the goats the left. Stripped of its allegory, you must know, the sheep are *I* and the Apostles, and the Martyrs, and the Popes, and Bishop Taylor, and Bishop Horsley, and Coleridge, &c., &c.; the goats are the Atheists and the Adulterers, and dumb dogs, and Godwin and M g, and that Thyestæan crew—yaw! how my saintship sickens at the idea!

You shall have my play and the Falstaff letters in a day or two. I will write to Lloyd by this day's post.

Pray, is it a part of your sincerity to show my letters to Lloyd? for really, gentlemen ought to explain their virtues upon a first acquaintance, to prevent mistakes.

God bless you, Manning. Take my trifling *as trifling*; and believe me, seriously and deeply,

Your well-wisher and friend,

C. L.

['My enemy's bitch.' See *King Lear*, Act IV, Scene vii.

Bishop Horsley (then of Rochester, afterwards St. Asaph's) was probably included ironically on account of his hostility to Priestley.

Manning did not reply to this letter until 9th March, when he answered two at once. Here are the salient passages, in one of which Coleridge's occasional veracity is vindicated:

Upon looking back to your Penultimate letter I find the following Query—'Pray is it a part of your sincerity to shew my letters to Lloyd?' To which I answer, 'No.' I shewed *that former* letter of yours to him, *because* anything, that might, per se, appear harsh, is corrected by the statement of the reason why you would not write so freely to him on that subject; yea better corrected & qualified than any extract wou'd have been by comments of *mine*. Your last letter I did not shew him, altho it concerned himself—I thought he would neither see the beauty of, nor be *exactly* pleased with the sentence (which upon my soul I think exquisite) 'A letter I would not have sent to my Enemy's Bitch, if she had thought proper to seek me in the way of marriage.'—I expect you to see, from this example, without my saying anything further, that you may write most freely to me.—One thing, tho', I must beg of you—that is, not to call me Atheist in your letters—for tho' it be mere raillery in *you*, & not meant as a serious imputation on my Faith, yet, if the Catholic or any other intolerant religion should h[appen] to become established in England, (which sp[ite] of the Bishop of R——r, may be the case) & if the Post-people should happen to open & read your letters (which, considering the sometimes quaintness of their form, they may possibly be

incited to do) such names might send me to Smithfield on a hurdle,—& nothing, *upon earth*, is more discordant to my wishes, than to become one of the Smithfield Illuminati.

You recollect, I suppose, the story about Coleridge's humming Caldwell of Jesus College concerning his newspaper engagements—well, it is turned out to be all a mistake—Caldwell has never imputed any such declaration to Coleridge—'twould waste both your time & my own to explain such nonsense.—]

60. TO THOMAS MANNING

[P.M. 1st March 1800.]

I hope by this time you are prepared to say the 'Falstaff's letters' are a bundle of the sharpest, queerest, profoundest humours, of any these juice-drained latter times have spawned. I should have advertised you, that the meaning is frequently hard to be got at; and so are the future guineas, that now lie ripening and aurifying in the womb of some undiscovered Potosi; but dig, dig, dig, dig, Manning! I set to with an unconquerable propulsion to write, with a lamentable want of what to write. My private goings on are orderly as the movements of the spheres, and stale as their music to angels' ears. Public affairs—except as they touch upon me, and so turn into private, I cannot whip up my mind to feel any interest in. I grieve, indeed, that War and Nature and Mr. Pitt, that hangs up in Lloyd's best parlour, should have conspired to call up three necessities, simple commoners as our fathers knew them, into the upper house of Luxuries; Bread, and Beer, and Coals, Manning. But as to France and Frenchmen, and the Abbé Sièyes and his constitutions, I cannot make these present times present to me. I read histories of the past, and I live in them; although, to abstract senses, they are far less momentous than the noises which keep Europe awake. I am reading Burnet's Own Times. Did you ever read that garrulous, pleasant history? He tells his story like an old man past political service, bragging to his sons on winter evenings of the part he took in public transactions, when his 'old cap was new.' Full of scandal, which all true history is. No palliatives, but all the stark wickedness,

that actually gives the *momentum* to national actors. Quite the prattle of age and out-lived importance. Truth and sincerity staring out upon you perpetually in *alto rilievo*. Himself a party man—he makes you a party man. None of the Damned philosophical Humeian indifference, so cold, and unnatural, and inhuman! None of the damned Gibbonian fine writing, so fine and composite. None of Mr. Robertson's periods with three members. None of Mr. Roscoe's sage remarks, all so apposite, and coming in so clever, lest the reader should have had the trouble of drawing an inference. Burnet's good old prattle I can bring present to my mind—I can make the revolution present to me; the French Revolution, by a converse perversity in my nature, I fling as far *from* me. To quit this damn'd subject, and to relieve you from two or three dismal yawns, which I hear in spirit, I here conclude my more than commonly obtuse letter; dull up to the dulness of a Dutch commentator on Shakspeare.

My love to Lloyd and Sophia.

C. L.

[Addressed to Mr. Thomas Manning, Mr. Crisp's, near St. Mary's Church, Cambridge.

'War and Nature and Mr. Pitt.' The war had sent up taxation to an almost unbearable height. Pitt was Chancellor of Exchequer, as well as Prime Minister.

Hume, Gibbon, and Robertson were among the books which, in the *Elia* essay 'Detached Thoughts on Books and Reading,' Lamb described as *biblia-a-biblia*. William Roscoe's principal work was his *Life of Lorenzo de' Medici*, 1795.]

61. TO MRS. CHARLES LLOYD, SENR.

[No date: Probably *Wednesday*, 12th March 1800.]

C. Lamb's respects to Mrs. Lloyd, and will comply with her kind invitation for Friday morning.

E. I. H.

Wednesday Mornng.

C. L. has just received a very long letter from Robert, whom he had hoped to have seen with Mrs. L.—

62. TO THOMAS MANNING

[P.M. 17th March 1800.]

DEAR MANNING,

I am living in a continuous feast. Coleridge has been with me now for nigh three weeks, and the more I see of him in the quotidian undress and relaxation of his mind, the more cause I see to love him, and believe him a *very good man*, and all those foolish impressions to the contrary fly off like morning slumbers. He is engaged in translations, which I hope will keep him this month to come. He is uncommonly kind and friendly to me. He ferrets me day and night to *do something*. He tends me, amidst all his own worrying and heart-oppressing occupations, as a gardener tends his young *tulip*. Marry come up! what a pretty similitude, and how like your humble servant! He has lugged me to the brink of engaging to a newspaper, and has suggested to me for a first plan the forgery of a supposed manuscript of Burton the anatomist of melancholy. I have even written the introductory letter; and, if I can pick up a few guineas this way, I feel they will be most *refreshing*, bread being so dear. If I go on with it, I will apprise you of it, as you may like to see my things! and the *tulip*, of all flowers, loves to be admired most.

Pray pardon me, if my letters do not come very thick. I am so taken up with one thing or other, that I cannot pick out (I will not say time, but) fitting times to write to you.

My dear love to Lloyd and Sophia, and pray split this thin letter into three parts, and present them with the *two biggest* in my name.

They are my oldest friends; but ever the new friend driveth out the old, as the ballad sings!

God bless you all three! I would hear from Lloyd, if I could.
C. L.

Flour has just fallen nine shillings a sack! we shall be all too rich.

Tell Charles I have seen his Mamma, and ham almost fallen in love with *her*, since I mayn't with Olivia. She is so fine and graceful, a complete Matron-Lady-Quaker. She has given me two little books. Olivia grows a charming girl—full of feeling, and *thinner* than she was—

But I have not time to fall in love.

Mary presents her *general compliments*. She keeps in fine health! Huzza! Boys,
and down with the Atheists.

[Coleridge, having sent his wife and Hartley into the country, had, for a while, taken up his abode with Lamb at 36 Chapel Street, Pentonville, and given up the *Morning Post* in order to proceed with his translation of Schiller's *Wallenstein*. Lamb's forgery of Burton, together with those mentioned in the next letter, which were never printed by Stuart, for whom they were written, was included in the *John Woodvil* volume, 1802, among the 'Curious Fragments, extracted from a commonplace book, which belonged to Robert Burton, the famous Author of *The Anatomy of Melancholy*.']

'They are my oldest friends.' Coleridge and Southey were, of course, older. The ballad I have not found.

'Ham almost fallen in love with her.' Lamb's spelling.]

63. TO THOMAS MANNING

[P.M. 5th April 1800.]

C. L.'s moral sense presents her compliments to Doctor Manning, is very thankful for his medical advice, but is happy to add that her disorder has died of itself.

Dr. Manning, Coleridge has left us, to go into the north, on a visit to his god Wordsworth. With him have flown all my splendid prospects or engagement with the 'Morning Post,' all my visionary guineas, the deceitful wages of unborn scandal. In truth, I wonder you took it up so seriously. All my intention was but to make a little sport with such public and fair game as Mr. Pitt, Mr. Wilberforce, Mrs. Fitzherbert, the Devil, &c.—gentry dipped in Styx all over, whom no paper javelin-lings can touch. To have made free with these cattle, where was the harm? 'twould have been but giving a polish to lampblack, not nigrifying a negro primarily. After all, I cannot but regret my involuntary virtue. Damn virtue that's thrust upon us; it behaves itself with such constraint, till conscience opens the window and lets out the goose.

I had struck off two imitations of Burton, quite abstracted from any modern allusions, which it was my intent only to lug

in from time to time to make 'em popular. Stuart has got these, with an introductory letter; but, not hearing from him, I have ceased from my labours, but I write to him to-day to get a final answer. I am afraid they won't do for a paper. Burton is a scarce gentleman, not much known; else I had done 'em pretty well.

I have also hit off a few lines in the name of Burton, being a conceit of 'Diabolic Possession.' Burton was a man often assailed by deepest melancholy, and at other times much given to laughing and jesting, as is the way with melancholy men. I will send them you: they were almost extempore, and no great things; but you will indulge them. Robert Lloyd is come to town. He is a good fellow, with the best heart, but his feelings are shockingly *unsane*. Priscilla meditates going to see Pizarro at Drury Lane to-night (from her uncle's) under cover of coming to dine with me . . . *heu! tempora! heu! mores!*—I have barely time to finish, as I expect her and Robin every minute.—Yours as usual.

C. L.

[For Coleridge's movements see note to Letter No. 65. *Pizarro* was Sheridan's drama. It was acted this season, 1799–1800, sixty-seven times.

Daniel Stuart became proprietor of the *Morning Post* in 1795, retaining it until 1803. He bought the *Courier* in 1796. In the essay, 'Newspapers Thirty-five Years Ago,' written in 1831, Lamb calls him 'one of the finest tempered of editors.']

64. TO THOMAS MANNING

[No date: *April 1800.*]

I don't know whether you ever dipt into Burton's *Anatomy*. His manner is to shroud and carry off his feelings under a cloud of learned words. He has written but one Poem, which is prefix'd to his *Anatomy*, and called *The Abstract of Melancholy*. Most likely you have seen it. It is in the last edition of the *Elegant Extracts*. It begins: 'When I go musing all alone, Thinking of divers things foredone.'—So that I have collected my imitation rather from his prose Book, than any Poetry.

I call it

A CONCEPT OF DIABOLICAL POSSESSION

By myself walking,
 To myself talking,
 While as I ruminate
 On my untoward fate,
 Scarcely seem I
 Alone sufficiently;
 Black thoughts continually
 Crowding my privacy,
 They come unbidden,
 Like foes at a wedding,
 Thrusting their faces
 In better guests' places,
 Peevish and malcontent
 Clownish impertinents,
 Dashing the merriments;—
 So in like fashion
 Dim cogitations
 Follow & haunt me,
 Striving to daunt me,
 In my heart festering,
 In my ears whispering,
 'Thy friends are treacherous,
 Thy foes are dangerous,
 Thy dreams ominous'
 Fierce Anthropophagi,
 Spectra, Diaboli,
 What scared Saint Anthony,
 Shapes undefined,
 With my fears twined,
 Hobgoblin, Lemures,
 Dreams of antipodes,
 Night-riding Incubi,
 Troubling the fantasy,
 All dim illusions,
 Causing confusions,
 Figments heretical,
 Scruples fantastical
 Doubts diabolical,
 Abaddon vexeth me,
 Mahu¹ perplexeth me,
 Lucifer teareth me, . . .
 Jesu Mari[®], libera nos ab

¹ The name of a Great Devil.

his tentationibus, orat, implorat,
R. Burton Peccator.—

The clouds are blackning, the storms threatning,
And ever the forest maketh a moan,
Billows are breaking, the Damsel's heart aching,
Thus by herself she singeth alone
Weeping right plenteously:
'The world is empty, the heart is dead surely,
In this world plainly all seemeth amiss,
To thy breast, Holy one, take now thy little one,
I have had earnest of all earth's bliss,
Living right lovingly——'

The manner in both is so antique, that I should despair of many folks liking them.—

You may *perhaps* never have met with Percy's Relicks of ancient English Poetry; if you have, and are acquainted with the following Poem, no harm is done;—if not, I send you a treat, that's all——

EDWARD, EDWARD

(I change my mind, I will give it you in its old own Scottish shape. . . . The rimes else will be lost.)

Why does your Brand ¹ so drop with bluid,
Edward, Edward?
Why does your Brand so drop with Bluid?
And why so sad gang ye, O?

O! I have killed my hawk so gude,
Mother, Mother,
O! I have killed my hawk so gude,
And I had no more but he, O!

Your hawk's bluid was never so red,
Edward, Edward,
Your hawk's bluid was never so red,
My dear son, I tell thee, O!

O! I have kill'd my red-roan steed,
Mother, Mother,
O! I have kill'd my red-roan steed
That erst was so fair and free, O!

¹ Sword.

Your steed was auld, & ye ha' got more,
Edward, Edward;
Your steed was auld, & ye ha' got more,
Some other dule ye drie, O!

O! I have kill'd my father dear,
Mother, Mother;—
O! I have kill'd my father dear,
Alas! & woe is me, O!—

And whatten penance will ye do for that,
Edward, Edward?
And whatten penance will ye do for that?
My dear son now tell me, O!

I'll set my feet in yonder Boat,
Mother, Mother.
I'll set my feet in yonder Boat,
And I'll far over the sea, O!

And what will ye do with your towers & your hall,
Edward, Edward?
And what will ye do with your towers & your hall,
That were so fair to see, O?

I'll let them stand till they down fall,
Mother, Mother.
I'll let them stand till they down fall,
For here never more must I be, O!

And what will ye leave to your bairns & your wife,
Edward, Edward?
And what will ye leave to your bairns & your wife,
When ye gang over the sea, O?

The world's room, let them beg through life,
Mother, Mother.
The world's room. Let 'em beg thro' life,
For them never more will I see, O!

And what will ye leave to your own mother dear?
Edward, Edward
And what will ye leave to your own mother dear?
My dear son, now tell me, O!

The curse of Hell frae me shall ye bear,

Mother, Mother:

The curse of Hell frae me shall ye bear,

Sic counsels ye gave me, O!

! ! ! ! ! ! ! ! ! !

By which I mean to say, that Edward, Edward, is the very first dramatic poem in the English Language. . . . If you deny that, I'll make you eat your words.

C. LAMB.

[This letter was probably written a few days after the one of 5th April, as in that Lamb promises to send his 'Diabolical Possession.' Unfortunately Manning's letters for this period are missing, otherwise the dating of this and the succeeding letters would be much simpler.]

65. TO S. T. COLERIDGE

[No date: Probably 16th or 17th April 1800.]

I send you, in this parcel, my play, which I beg you to present in my name, with my respect and love, to Wordsworth and his sister. You blame us for giving your direction to Miss Wesley; the woman has been ten times after us about it, and we gave it her at last, under the idea that no further harm would ensue, but she would *once* write to you, and you would bite your lips and forget to answer it, and so it would end. You read us a dismal homily upon 'Realities.' We know, quite as well as you do, what are shadows and what are realities. You, for instance, when you are over your fourth or fifth jorum, chirping about old school occurrences, are the best of realities. Shadows are cold, thin things, that have no warmth or grasp in them. Miss Wesley and her friend, and a tribe of authoresses that come after you here daily, and, in defect of you, hive and cluster upon us, are the shadows. You encouraged that mopsey, Miss Wesley, to dance after you, in the hope of having her nonsense put into a nonsensical Anthology. We have pretty well shaken her off, by that simple expedient of referring her to you; but there are more burrs in the wind. I came home t'other day from business, hungry as a hunter, to dinner, with nothing, I am sure, of *the*

author but hunger about me, and whom found I closeted with Mary but a friend of this Miss Wesley, one Miss Benje, or Benjey—I don't know how she spells her name. I just came in time enough, I believe, luckily to prevent them from exchanging vows of eternal friendship. It seems she is one of your authoresses, that you first foster, and then upbraid us with. But I forgive you. 'The rogue has given me potions to make me love him.' Well; go she would not, nor step a step over our threshold, till we had promised to come and drink tea with her next night. I had never seen her before, and could not tell who the devil it was that was so familiar. We went, however, not to be impolite. Her lodgings are up two pairs of stairs in East Street. Tea and coffee, and macaroons—a kind of cake I much love. We sat down. Presently Miss Benje broke the silence, by declaring herself quite of a different opinion from D'Israeli, who supposes the differences of human intellect to be the mere effect of organization. She begged to know my opinion. I attempted to carry it off with a pun upon organ; but that went off very flat. She immediately conceived a very low opinion of my metaphysics; and, turning round to Mary, put some question to her in French,—possibly having heard that neither Mary nor I understood French. The explanation that took place occasioned some embarrassment and much wondering. She then fell into an insulting conversation about the comparative genius and merits of all modern languages, and concluded with asserting that the Saxon was esteemed the purest dialect in Germany. From thence she passed into the subject of poetry; where I, who had hitherto sat mute and a hearer only, humbly hoped I might now put in a word to some advantage, seeing that it was my own trade in a manner. But I was stopped by a round assertion, that no good poetry had appeared since Dr. Johnson's time. It seems the Doctor has suppressed many hopeful geniuses that way by the severity of his critical strictures in his 'Lives of the Poets.' I here ventured to question the fact, and was beginning to appeal to *names*, but I was assured 'it was certainly the case.' Then we discussed Miss More's book on education, which I had never read. It seems Dr. Gregory, another of Miss Benjey's friends, has found fault with one of Miss More's metaphors. Miss More has been at some pains to vindicate herself—in the opinion of Miss Benjey,

not without success. It seems the Doctor is invariably against the use of broken or mixed metaphor, which he reprobates against the authority of Shakspeare himself. We next discussed the question, whether Pope was a poet? I find Dr. Gregory is of opinion he was not, though Miss Seward does not at all concur with him in this. We then sat upon the comparative merits of the ten translations of 'Pizarro,' and Miss Benjey or Benje advised Mary to take two of them home; she thought it might afford her some pleasure to compare them *verbatim*; which we declined. It being now nine o'clock, wine and macaroons were again served round, and we parted, with a promise to go again next week, and meet the Miss Porters, who, it seems, have heard much of Mr. Coleridge, and wish to meet *us*, because we are *his* friends. I have been preparing for the occasion. I crowd cotton in my ears. I read all the reviews and magazines of the past month against the dreadful meeting, and I hope by these means to cut a tolerable second-rate figure.

Pray let us have no more complaints about shadows. We are in a fair way, *through you*, to surfeit sick upon them.

Our loves and respects to your host and hostess. Our dearest love to Coleridge.

Take no thought about your proof-sheets; they shall be done as if Woodfall himself did them. Pray send us word of Mrs. Coleridge and little David Hartley, your little reality.

Farewell, dear Substance. Take no umbrage at any thing I have written.

C. LAMB, *Umbra*.

Land of Shadows,
Shadow-month the 16th or 17th, 1800.

Coleridge, I find loose among your papers a copy of '*Christabel*.' It wants about thirty lines; you will very much oblige me by sending me the beginning as far as that line,—

And the spring comes slowly up this way;
and the intermediate lines between—

The lady leaps up suddenly,
The lovely Lady Christabel;

and the lines,—

She folded her arms beneath her cloak,
And stole to the other side of the oak.

The trouble to you *will be small*, and the benefit to us *very great* !
A pretty antithesis ! A figure in speech I much applaud.

Godwin has called upon us. He spent one evening here. Was very friendly. Kept us up till midnight. Drank punch, and talked about you. He seems, above all men, mortified at your going away. Suppose you were to write to that good-natured heathen—'or is he a *shadow* ?' If I do not write, impute it to the long postage, of which you have so much cause to complain. I have scribbled over a *queer letter*, as I find by perusal ; but it means no mischief.

I am, and will be, yours ever, in sober sadness,

C. L.

Write your *German* as plain as sunshine, for that must correct itself. You know I am *homo unius linguæ* : in English, illiterate, a dunce, a ninny.

[Having left Lamb, Coleridge went to Grasmere, where he stayed at Dove Cottage with Wordsworth and finished his translation, which was ready for the printer on 22nd April. To what Lamb alludes in his reference to the homily on 'Realities' I cannot say, but presumably Coleridge had written a metaphysical letter on this subject. Lamb returns to the matter at the end of the first part of his reply.

Miss Wesley was Sarah Wesley (1760-1828), the daughter of Charles Wesley and, therefore, niece of the great John and Samuel. She moved much in literary society. Miss Benjay, or Benjé, was in reality Elizabeth Ogilvy Benger (1778-1827), a friend of Mrs. Inchbald, Mrs. Barbauld, and the Aikins, and other literary people. Madame de Staël called her the most interesting woman she had met in England. She wrote novels and poems and biographies, and was shortly to be worshipped by George Dyer, but to give him no encouragement. In those days there were two East Streets, one leading from Red Lion Square to Lamb's Conduit Street, and one in the neighbourhood of Clare Market.

D'Israeli was Isaac Disraeli, the author of *The Curiosities of Literature* and other books about books and authors ; Miss More was Hannah More, and her book, *Strictures on the Modern System of Female Education*, 1799 ; Dr. Gregory was the author of *A Father's Legacy to his Daughters* (G. A. A.) ; Miss Seward was Anna Seward, the Swan of Lichfield ; and the Miss Porters were Jane and Anna Maria, authors (later) respectively of *The Scottish Chiefs* and *Thaddeus of Warsaw*, and *The Hungarian Brothers*.

The proof-sheets were those of *Wallenstein*. Henry Sampson Woodfall was the famous printer of the *Letters of Junius*.

Christabel, Coleridge's poem, had been begun in 1797 ; it was finished, in so far as it was finished, later in the year 1800. It was published first in 1816.

'Homo unius linguæ.' Lamb exaggerated here. He had much Latin, more than a little Greek, and apparently a little French. The sentence is in the manner of Burton, whom Lamb had been imitating.

The sentence about Godwin is a little confusing. 'Called upon us since you left' is probably the full sense, for we know that he had dined with Lamb earlier in the year, and Coleridge had written to him as 'at Mr. Lamb's, March 3, 1800.'

The phrase 'long postage' refers to the cost of letters between London and Grasmere.]

66. TO S. T. COLERIDGE

Monday, May 12th, 1800.

MY DEAR COLERIDGE

I don't know why I write, except from the propensity misery has to tell her griefs. Hetty died on Friday night, about eleven o'clock, after eight days' illness; Mary, in consequence of fatigue and anxiety, is fallen ill again, and I was obliged to remove her yesterday. I am left alone in a house with nothing but Hetty's dead body to keep me company. To-morrow I bury her, and then I shall be quite alone, with nothing but a cat to remind me that the house has been full of living beings like myself. My heart is quite sunk, and I don't know where to look for relief. Mary will get better again; but her constantly being liable to such relapses is dreadful; nor is it the least of our evils that her case and all our story is so well known around us. We are in a manner *marked*. Excuse my troubling you; but I have nobody by me to speak to me. I slept out last night, not being able to endure the change and the stillness. But I did not sleep well, and I must come back to my own bed. I am going to try and get a friend to come and be with me to-morrow. I am completely shipwrecked. My head is quite bad. I almost wish that Mary were dead.—God bless you! Love to Sara and Hartley.

C. LAMB.

[Hetty was the Lambs' aged servant, and this was Mary Lamb's first serious attack, a malady that was to become habitual, since her father's death.]

67. TO THOMAS MANNING

May 17, 1800.

DEAR MANNING,

I am quite out of spirits, and feel as if I should never recover them. But why should not this pass away? I am foolish, but judge of me by my situation. Our servant is dead, and my sister is ill—so ill as to make a removal to a place of confinement absolutely necessary. I have been left *alone* in a house where but ten days since living beings were, and noises of life were heard. I have made the experiment and find I cannot bear it any longer. Last night I went to sleep at White's, with whom I am to be until I can find a settlement. I have given up my house, and must look out for lodgings. I expect Mary will get better before many weeks are gone,—but at present I feel my daily and hourly prop has fallen from me. I totter and stagger with weakness, for nobody can supply her place to me. White has *all kindness*, but not *sympathy*. R. Lloyd, my only correspondent, you except, is a good Being, but a weak one. I know not where to look but to you. If you will suffer me to weary your shoulders with part of my Burthen, I shall write again to let you know how I go on. Meantime a letter from you would be a considerable relief to me.—Believe me, yours most sincerely,

C. L.

[White is the author of *Falstaff's Letters*.]

68. TO THOMAS MANNING

[P.M. 20th May 1800.]

DEAR MANNING,

I feel myself unable to thank you sufficiently for your kind letter. It was doubly acceptable to me, both for the choice poetry and the kind honest prose which it contained. It was just such a letter as I should have expected from Manning.

I am in much better spirits than when I wrote last. I have had a very eligible offer to lodge with a friend in town. He will have rooms to let at midsummer, by which time I hope my sister will be well enough to join me. It is a great object to me to live in town, where we shall be much more *private*, and to quit a house

and neighbourhood where poor Mary's disorder, so frequently recurring, has made us a sort of marked people. We can be nowhere private except in the midst of London. We shall be in a family where we visit very frequently . . . only my landlord and I have not yet come to a conclusion. He has a partner to consult. I am still on the tremble, for I do not know where we could go into lodgings that would not be, in many respects, highly exceptionable. Only God send Mary well again, and I hope all will be well! The prospect, such as it is, has made me quite happy. I have just time to tell you of it, as I know it will give you pleasure.—Farewell.

C. LAMB.

[Manning's letter containing the choice poetry has not been preserved.

The friend in town was John Mathew Gutch (1776–1861), with whom Lamb had been at school at Christ's Hospital, who was now a law stationer, in partnership with one Anderson, at 27 Southampton Buildings, Chancery Lane, since demolished.]

69. TO THOMAS MANNING

[No date: *Early June 1800.*]

DEAR MANNING,

I am a letter in your debt, but I am scarcely rich enough (in spirits) to pay you.—I am writing at an inn on the Ware road, in the neighbourhood of which I am going to pass two days, being Whitsuntide.—Excuse the pen, tis the best I can get.—Poor Mary is very bad yet. I went yesterday hoping I should see her getting well, then I might have come into the country more chearful, but I could not get to see her. This has been a sad damp. Indeed I never in my life have been more wretched than I was all day yesterday. I am glad I am going away from business for a little while, for my head has been hot and ill. I shall be very much alone where I am going, which always revives me. I hope you will accept of this worthless memento, which I merely send as a token that I am in your debt. I will write upon my return, on Thursday at farthest. I return on Wednesday.—

God bless you.

I was afraid you would think me forgetful, and that made me scribble this jumble.

Sunday.

70. TO THOMAS MANNING

[8th June 1800.]

DEAR MANNING,

I have been passing three or four quiet days in Hertfordshire which have done my spirits a world of good. On my return I found my sister perfectly recovered. She is to join me next Sunday. So soon hath this terrifying tempest passed over. I am ashamed I ever troubled you with the story. I am sitting in minutely expectation of a friend's coming to Tea.—I will hastily transcribe a little Poem, which I wrote for Burton.—

The Case plainly stated between
a rich noble's Palace & a poor Workhouse—

THE ARGUMENT

In a costly palace youth meets respect.
In a wretched workhouse age finds neglect.

Evidenced [? evinced] thus

1

In a costly palace youth goes clad in gold;
In a wretched workhouse age's limbs are cold,
There they sit, the old men, by a shivering fire,
Still close & closer cowering, warmth is their desire.

2

In a costly palace when the brave gallants dine,
They have store of good venison with old Canary wine,
With singing and music to heighten the Cheer;
Coarse bits with grudging are the Pauper's best fare.

3

In a costly palace youth is still carest
By a train of attendants which laugh at my young lord's jest;
In a wretched workhouse the contrary prevails,
When age begins to prattle, no man hark'neth to his tales.

4

In a costly palace if the child with a pin
Do but chance to prick a finger, strait the Doctor is called in;
In a wretched workhouse men are left to perish
For want of proper cordials which their old age might cherish.

5

In a costly palace youth enjoys his Lust,
 In a wretched workhouse Age, in corners thrust,
 Thinks upon the former days when he was well to do,
 Had children to stand by him, both friends & kindness too.

6

In a costly palace youth his temples hides
 With a new devised Peruke that reaches to his sides;
 In a wretched workhouse Age's crown is bare,
 With a few thin locks just to fence out the cold air.

7

In peace as in war tis our young gallants' pride
 To walk each one the streets with a rapier at his side,
 That none to do them injury may have pretence;
 Wretched Age in Poverty must brook offence—

THE CONSEQUENCE

Wanton youth is oft-times haught and swelling found,
 When Age for very shame goes stooping to the ground—¹

You see I have followed the old writers, whose way was to take
 the *Extremes of either State* & make a *fair Comparison*—

Sunday.

I wish you to like it—

I think it my *cheff du ver*—

how do ye spell it?

C. L.

Text in B. Ed.

[The ballad in imitation of Burton was printed with *John Woodvil* in 1802.]

71. TO S. T. COLERIDGE

[No date: ? 28th July 1800.]

DEAR COLERIDGE,

Soon after I wrote to you last, an offer was made me by Gutch
 (you must remember him? at Christ's—you saw him, slightly,

¹ Hutchinson's addition: THE CONCLUSION *Dura Paupertas!*

one day with Thomson at our house)—to come and lodge with him at his house in Southampton Buildings, Chancery-Lane. This was a very comfortable offer to me, the rooms being at a reasonable rent, and including the use of an old servant, besides being infinitely preferable to ordinary lodgings *in our case*, as you must perceive. As Gutch knew all our story and the perpetual liability to a recurrence in my sister's disorder, probably to the end of her life, I certainly think the offer very generous and very friendly. I have got three rooms (including servant) under £34 a year. Here I soon found myself at home; and here, in six weeks after, Mary was well enough to join me. So we are once more settled. I am afraid we are not placed out of the reach of future interruptions. But I am determined to take what snatches of pleasure we can between the acts of our distressful drama. . . . I have passed two days at Oxford on a visit, which I have long put off, to Gutch's family. The sight of the Bodleian Library and, above all, a fine bust of Bishop *Taylor* at All Souls', were particularly gratifying to me; unluckily, it was not a family where I could take Mary with me, and I am afraid there is something of dishonesty in any pleasures I take without *her*. [*Two lines erased.*] She never goes anywhere.

I do not know what I can add to this letter. I hope you are better by this time; and I desire to be affectionately remembered to Sara and Hartley. I expected before this to have had tidings of another little philosopher. Lloyd's wife is on the point of favouring the world.

Have you seen the new edition of Burns? his posthumous works and letters? I have only been able to procure the first volume which contains his life—very confusedly and badly written, and interspersed with dull pathological and *medical* discussions. It is written by a Dr. Currie. Do you know the well-meaning doctor? *Alas, ne sutor ultra crepitum!*

I hope to hear again from you very soon. Godwin is gone to Ireland on a visit to Grattan. Before he went I passed much time with him, and he has showed me particular attentions: N.B. A thing I much like!

Your Books are all safe: only I have not thought it necessary to fetch away your last batch, which I understand are at Johnson's the bookseller, who has got quite as much room, and will take

as much care of them as myself—and you can send for them immediately from him.

I wish you would advert to a letter I sent you at Grasmere about 'Christabel,' and comply with my request contained therein.

Love to all friends round Skiddaw.

C. LAMB.

[The Coleridges had just moved to Greta Hall, Keswick.

'Bishop Taylor.' Jeremy Taylor (1613–67), Bishop of Down and Connor, author of *Holy Living* and *Holy Dying*.

'Another little philosopher.' Derwent Coleridge was born 14th September 1800.

Sophie Lloyd's first child, Charles Grosvenor Lloyd, was born on 31st July 1800.

The new edition of Burns was Dr. James Currie's, with a biography prefixed to the poems. It was issued, in 1800, to raise funds for the poet's wife and family.

'Ne sutor. . .' This is the only letter from which I have made an omission: a variation of the saying that a cobbler should stick to his last, too coarse for print. Godwin had gone to stay with Curran: he saw much of Grattan also.

Johnson, the publisher and bookseller, lived at 72 St. Paul's Churchyard. He published Priestley's works.]

72. TO ROBERT LLOYD

[No date: July 1800.]

DEAR ROBERT,

My mind has been so barren and idle of late, that I have done nothing. I have received many a summons from you, and have repeatedly sat down to write, and broke off from despair of sending you anything worthy your acceptance. I have had such a deadness about me. Man delights not me nor woman neither. I impute it in part, or altogether, to the stupefying effect which continued fine weather has upon me. I want some rains, or even snow and intense cold winter nights, to bind me to my habitation, and make me value it as a home—a sacred character which it has not attained with me hitherto. I cannot read or write when the sun shines: I can only walk.

I must tell you that, since I wrote last I have been two days at Oxford, on a visit (long put off) to Gutch's family (my landlord). I was much gratified with the Colleges and Libraries and what else of Oxford I could see in so short a time. In the All Souls' Library is a fine head of Bishop Taylor, which was one great

inducement to my Oxford visit. In the Bodleian are many Portraits of illustrious Dead, the only species of painting I value at a farthing. But an indubitable good Portrait of a great man is worth a pilgrimage to go and see. Gutch's family is a very fine one, consisting of well-grown sons and daughters, and all likely and well-favour'd. What is called a Happy family—that is, according to my interpretation, a numerous assemblage of young men and women, all fond of each other to a certain degree, and all happy together, but where the very number forbids any two of them to get close enough to each other to share secrets and *be friends*. That close intercourse can only exist (commonly, I think,) in a family of two or three. I do not envy large families. The fraternal affection by diffusion and multi-participation is ordinarily thin and weak. They don't get near enough to each other.

I expected to have had an account of Sophia's being brought to bed before this time; but I remain in confidence that you will send me the earliest news. I hope it will be happy.

Coleridge is settled at Keswick, so that the probability is that he will be once again united with your Brother. Such men as he and Wordsworth would exclude solitude in the Hebrides or Thule.

Pray have you seen the New Edition of Burns, including his posthumous works? I want very much to get a sight of it, but cannot afford to buy it, my Oxford Journey, though very moderate, having pared away all superfluities.

Will you accept of this short letter, accompanied with professions of deepest regard for you?

Yours unalterably,

C. LAMB.

[The following undated letter, which may be placed a little too soon in its present position, comes with a certain fitness here.]

73. TO JOHN MATHEW GUTCH

[No date: 1800.]

DEAR GUTCH,

Anderson is not come home, and I am almost afraid to tell you what has happen'd, lest it should seem to have happened by my fault in not writing for you home sooner.—

This morning Henry, the eldest lad, was missing. We supposed he was only gone out on a morning's stroll, and that he would return, but he did not return & we discovered that he had opened your desk before he went, & I suppose taken all the money he could find, for on diligent search I could find none, and on opening your Letter to Anderson, which I thought necessary to get at the key, I learn that you had a good deal of money there.

Several people have been here after you to-day, & the boys seem quite frightened, and do not know what to do. In particular, one gentleman wants to have some writings finished by Tuesday—For God's sake set out by the first coach. Mary has been crying all day about it, and I am now just going to some law stationer in the neighbourhood, that the eldest boy has recommended, to get him to come and be in the house for a day or so, to manage. I cannot think what detains Anderson. His sister is quite frightend about him. I am very sorry I did not write yesterday, but Henry persuaded me to wait till he could ascertain when some job must be done (at the furthest) for Mr. Foulkes, and as nothing had occurrd besides I did not like to disturb your pleasures. I now see my error, and shall be heartily ashamed to see you.

[That is as far as the letter goes on the first page. We then turn over, and find (as Gutch, to his immense relief, found before us) written right across both pages :]

A BITE!!!

Anderson is come home, and the wheels of thy business are going on as ever. The boy is honest, and I am thy friend.

And how does the coach-maker's daughter? Thou art her Phaeton, her Gig, and her Sociable. Commend me to Rob.

C. LAMB.

Saturday.

[This letter is the first example extant of Lamb's tendency to hoaxing. Gutch was at that time courting a Miss Wheeley, the daughter of a Birmingham coachbuilder. It was while he was in Birmingham that Lamb wrote the letter. Anderson was Gutch's partner in business. Rob would be Robert Lloyd, then at Birmingham again.]

Sociables were carriages with two double seats facing each other and a box for the driver.]

74. TO THOMAS MANNING

Monday morning. [July 1800.]

I have just got your *scrap*—Pray tell me if you consider *this* as just payment for *value received*. If not, to work again, my pen. I am just now engaged in the addition of 900 pages, continent of twenty sums a piece—O the drudgery to which your great geniuses are exposed—But Jupiter wore a Bull's hide, and Apollo kept Admetus's swine, each for his goddess.—Mine is Pecunia, Blessing on her golden Looks.—

Pray write. [*Remainder torn off.*]

[Lamb's retaliatory 'scrap' I have not identified. Pecunia's Looks may be Locks.]

75. TO S. T. COLERIDGE

Aug. 6th, 1800.

DEAR COLERIDGE,

I have taken to-day, and delivered to Longman and Co., *Imprimis*: your books, viz., three ponderous German dictionaries, one volume (I can find no more) of German and French ditto, sundry other German books unbound, as you left them, Percy's Ancient Poetry, and one volume of Anderson's Poets. I specify them, that you may not lose any. *Secundo*: a dressing-gown (value, fivepence), in which you used to sit and look like a conjuror, when you were translating 'Wallenstein.' A case of two razors and a shaving-box and strap. This it has cost me a severe struggle to part with. They are in a brown-paper parcel, which also contains sundry papers and poems, sermons, *some few Epic Poems*,—one about Cain and Abel, which came from Poole, &c., &c., and also your tragedy; with one or two small German books, and that drama in which Got-fader performs. *Tertio*: a small oblong box containing *all your letters*, collected from all your waste papers, and which fill the said little box. All other waste papers, which I judged worth sending, are in the paper parcel aforesaid. But you will find *all your letters* in the box by themselves. Thus have I discharged my conscience and my

lumber-room of all your property, save and except a folio entitled Tyrell's *Bibliotheca Politica*, which you used to learn your politics out of when you wrote for the Post, *mutatis mutandis*, i.e., applying past inferences to modern *data*. I retain that, because I am sensible I am very deficient in the politics myself; and I have torn up—don't be angry, waste paper has risen forty per cent., and I can't afford to buy it—all Buonaparte's Letters, Arthur Young's Treatise on Corn, and one or two more light-armed infantry, which I thought better suited the flippancy of London discussion than the dignity of Keswick thinking. Mary says you will be in a damned passion about them when you come to miss them; but you must study philosophy. Read Albertus Magnus de Chartis Amissis five times over after phlebotomising, —'tis Burton's recipe—and then be angry with an absent friend if you can. I have just heard that Mrs. Lloyd is delivered of a fine boy, and mother and boy are doing well. Fie on sluggards, what is thy Sara doing? Sara is obscure. Am I to understand by her letter, that she sends a *kiss* to Eliza Buckingham? Pray tell your wife that a note of interrogation on the superscription of a letter is highly ungrammatical—she proposes writing my name *Lamb*? *Lambe* is quite enough. I have had the Anthology, and like only one thing in it, *Lewti*; but of that the last stanza is detestable, the rest most exquisite!—the epithet *enviable* would dash the finest poem. For God's sake (I never was more serious), don't make me ridiculous any more by terming me gentle-hearted in print, or do it in better verses. It did well enough five years ago when I came to see you, and was moral coxcomb enough at the time you wrote the lines, to feed upon such epithets; but, besides that, the meaning of gentle is equivocal at best, and almost always means poor-spirited, the very quality of gentleness is abhorrent to such vile trumpeting. My *sentiment* is long since vanished. I hope my *virtues* have done *sucking*. I can scarce think but you meant it in joke. I hope you did, for I should be ashamed to think that you could think to gratify me by such praise, fit only to be a cordial to some green-sick sonneteer.

I have hit off the following in imitation of old English poetry, which, I imagine, I am a dab at. The measure is unmeasurable; but it most resembles that beautiful ballad of the 'Old and Young Courtier;' and in its feature of taking the extremes of two

situations for just parallel, it resembles the old poetry certainly. If I could but stretch out the circumstances to twelve more verses, *i.e.*, if I had as much genius as the writer of that old song, I think it would be excellent. It was to follow an imitation of Burton in prose, which you have not seen. But fate 'and wisest Stewart' say No.

I can send you 200 pens and six quires of paper *immediately*, if they will answer the carriage by coach. It would be foolish to pack 'em up *cum multis libris et cæteris*,—they would all spoil. I only wait your commands to coach them. I would pay five-and-forty thousand carriages to read W.'s tragedy, of which I have heard so much and seen so little—only what I saw at Stowey. Pray give me an order in writing on Longman for 'Lyrical Ballads.' I have the first volume, and, truth to tell, six shillings is a broad shot. I cram all I can in, to save a multiplying of letters—those pretty comets with swingeing tails.

I'll just crowd in God bless you!

C. LAMB.

Wednesday night.

[The epic about Cain and Abel was *The Wanderings of Cain*, which Coleridge projected but never finished. The drama in which Got-fader performs would be perhaps *Faust—Der Herr* in the Prologue—or one of Hans Sachs' plays, which Coleridge had a passion for.

'Tis Burton's recipe.' Lamb was just now steeped in the *Anatomy*; but there is no need to see if Burton says this.

'Eliza Buckingham.' Sara Coleridge's message was probably intended for Eliza, a servant at the Buckingham Street lodgings.

'Lambe' was the *Anti-Jacobin's* idea of Lamb's name; and indeed many persons adhered to it to the end. Mrs. Coleridge, when writing to her husband under care of Lamb at the India House, added 'e' to Lamb's name to signify that the letter was for Coleridge. Wordsworth later also had some of his letters addressed in the same way—for the same economical reason.

Coleridge's *Lewti* was reprinted, with alterations, from the *Morning Post*, in the *Annual Anthology*, vol. ii. Line 69 ran:

Had I the enviable power;

Coleridge changed this to:

Voice of the Night! had I the power.

'*This Lime-tree Bower my Prison*;' a Poem, addressed to Charles Lamb of the India House, London, was also in the *Annual Anthology*. Lamb objected to the phrase 'My gentle-hearted Charles' (see above). Lamb says 'five years ago'; he means three. Coleridge did not alter the phrase. It was against

this poem that he wrote in pencil on his deathbed in 1834: 'Ch. and Mary Lamb—dear to my heart, yea, as it were, my heart.—S. T. C. Aet. 63, 1834. 1797—1834=37 years!'

'I have hit off the following.' *A Ballad Denoting the Difference between the Rich and the Poor*, first printed among the Imitations of Burton in the *John Woodvil* volume, 1802.

'And wisest Stewart'—Stuart of the *Morning Post*. Adapted from Milton's *Hymn on the Nativity*:

But wisest Fate says no.

'W.'s [Wordsworth's] tragedy' was *The Borderers*.
The second edition of *Lyrical Ballads* was just ready.]

76. TO THOMAS MANNING

[P.M. 9th August 1800.]

DEAR MANNING,

I suppose you have heard of Sophia Lloyd's good fortune, and paid the customary compliments to the parents. Heaven keep the new-born infant from star-blasting and moon-blasting, from epilepsy, marasmus, and the devil! May he live to see many days, and they good ones; some friends, and they pretty regular correspondents, with as much wit as [?] and] wisdom as will eat their bread and cheese together under a poor roof without quarrelling; as much goodness as will earn heaven if there be such a place and deserve it if there be not, but, rather than go to bed solitary, would truckle with the meanest succubus on her bed of brimstone. Here I must leave off, my benedictory powers failing me. I could *curse* the sheet full; so much stronger is corruption than grace in the Natural Man.

And now, when shall I catch a glimpse of your honest face-to-face countenance again—your fine *dogmatical sceptical* face, by punch-light? O! one glimpse of the human face, and shake of the human hand, is better than whole reams of this cold, thin correspondence—yea, of more worth than all the letters that have sweated the fingers of sensibility from Madame Sevigné and Balzac (observe my Larning!) to Sterne and Shenstone.

Coleridge is settled with his wife (with a child in her guts) and the young philosopher at Keswick with the Wordsworths. They

have contrived to spawn a new volume of lyrical ballads, which is to see the light in about a month, and causes no little excitement in the *literary world*. George Dyer too, that good-natured heathen, is more than nine months gone with his twin volumes of ode, pastoral, sonnet, elegy, Spenserian, Horatian, Akensidish, and Masonic verse—Clio prosper the birth! it will be twelve shillings out of somebody's pocket. I find he means to exclude 'personal satire,' so it appears by his truly original advertisement. Well, God put it into the hearts of the English gentry to come in shoals and subscribe to his poems, for He never put a kinder heart into flesh of man than George Dyer's!

Now farewell: for dinner is at hand, and yearning guts do chide.

C. L.

[Southey's letters contain a glimpse of Lamb and Manning by punch-light. Writing in 1824, describing a certain expression of Mrs. Coleridge's face, Southey says:

First, then, it was an expression of dolorous alarm, such as Le Brun ought to have painted: but such as Manning never could have equalled, when, while Mrs. Lloyd was keeping her room in child-bed, he and Charles Lamb sate drinking punch in the room below till three in the morning—Manning acting Le Brun's passions (punchified at the time), and Charles Lamb (punchified also) roaring aloud and swearing, while the tears ran down his cheeks, that it required more genius than even Shakespeare possessed to personate them so well; Charles Lloyd the while (not punchified) praying and entreating them to go to bed, and not disturb his wife by the uproar they were making.

'Balzac.' Not, of course, the novelist; but Jean Louis Guez de Balzac (1594-1654) the letter-writer.

'Do chide.'

The cock doth crow, the day doth daw,
The channering worm doth chide.

Old Ballad.

Replying, on 10th August, Manning says:

If you wish to see my honest face (& tis a very honest face, but I may be a damned rogue for all that for as the learned Author of the Latin Grammar judiciously observeth, 'fronti nulla fides')¹ you must come to Cambridge—if you wish to give me a particular satisfaction, you must come to Cambridge—if you wish to give me no cause of dissatisfaction, you must come to

¹ 'There is no trust to be placed in outward looks.'—Juvenal, *Sat.* ii. 8.

Cambridge.—Give me a line to-morrow saying that you'll come yourself on Tuesday, & I'll prepare a lodging for you—or come without announcing your intention, if you don't chuse to write, & we'll see what we can do.—I shall be very much disengaged this week—so I shall next—after that I cannot promise.—The very thought of your coming makes my keg of Rum *wabble* about like a porpoise—& the liquor (how fine it smells!) goes *Gulteb squalluck* against the sides for joy.]

77. TO THOMAS MANNING

[P.M. 11th August 1800.]

My dear fellow (*N.B.* mighty familiar of late!) for me to come to Cambridge now is one of G—d Almighty's impossibilities. Metaphysicians tell us, even He can work nothing which implies a contradiction. I can explain this by telling you that I am engaged to do double duty (this hot weather!) for a man who has taken advantage of this very weather to go and cool himself in 'green retreats' all the month of August.

But for you to come to London instead!—muse upon it, revolve it, cast it about in your mind. I have a bed at your command. You shall drink rum, brandy, gin, aquavitæ, usquebaugh, or whiskey a' nights; and for the after-dinner trick I have eight bottles of genuine port, which, if mathematically divided, gives $1\frac{1}{2}$ for every day you stay, provided you stay a week. Hear John Milton sing,

Let Euclid rest and Archimedes pause.

Twenty-first Sonnet.

And elsewhere,—

What neat repast shall feast us, light¹ and choice,
Of Attic taste, with wine,² whence we may rise
To hear the lute well touch'd, or artful voice
Warble immortal notes and Tuscan air?

Indeed, the poets are full of this pleasing morality—

Veni cito, Domine Manning!

Think upon it. Excuse the paper: it is all I have.

N.B.—I lives at No. 27 Southampton Buildings, Holborn.

C. LAMB.

¹ We poets generally give *light* dinners.

² No doubt the poet here alludes to port wine at 38s. the dozen.

78. TO S. T. COLERIDGE

Thursday, Aug. 14, 1800.

Read on and you'll come to the *Pens*.

My head is playing all the tunes in the world, ringing such peals. It has just finished the 'Merry Christ Church Bells,' and absolutely is beginning 'Turn again, Whittington.' Buz, buz, buz: bum, bum, bum: wheeze, wheeze, wheeze: feu, feu, feu: tinky, tinky, tinky: *craunch*. I shall certainly come to be damned at last. I have been getting drunk for two days running. I find my moral sense in the last stage of a consumption, and my religion burning as blue and faint as the tops of burning bricks. Hell gapes and the Devil's great guts cry cupboard for me. In the midst of this infernal torture, Conscience (and be damn'd to her) is barking and yelping as loud as any of them.

I have sat down to read over again your satire upon me in the Anthology and I think I do begin to spy out something with beauty and design in it. I perfectly accede to all your alterations, and only desire that you had cut deeper, when your hand was in.

In the next edition of the 'Anthology' (which Phoebus avert and those nine other wandering maids also!) please to blot out *gentle-hearted*, and substitute: drunken dog, ragged-head, seld-shaven, odd-eyed, stuttering, or any other epithet which truly and properly belongs to the gentleman in question. And for Charles read Tom, or Bob, or Richard *for more delicacy*. Damn you, I was beginning to forgive you and believe in earnest that the lugging in of my proper name was purely unintentional on your part, when looking back for further conviction, stares me in the face *Charles Lamb of the India House*. Now I am convinced it was all done in malice, heaped sack-upon-sack, congregated, studied malice. You Dog! your 141st page shall not save you. I own I was just ready to acknowledge that there is a something not unlike good poetry in that page, if you had not run into the unintelligible abstraction-fit about the manner of the Deity's making spirits perceive his presence. God, nor created thing alive, can receive any honour from such thin show-box attributes.

By-the-by, where did you pick up that scandalous piece of private history about the angel and the Duchess of Devonshire?

If it is a fiction of your own, why truly it is a very modest one for you. Now I do affirm that 'Lewti' is a very beautiful poem. I was in earnest when I praised it. It describes a silly species of one not the wisest of passions. Therefore it cannot deeply affect a disenthralled mind. But such imagery, such novelty, such delicacy, and such versification never got into an 'Anthology' before. I am only sorry that the cause of all the passionate complaint is not greater than the trifling circumstance of Lewti being out of temper one day. In sober truth, I cannot see any great merit in the little Dialogue called 'Blenheim.' It is rather novel and pretty; but the thought is very obvious and children's poor prattle, a thing of easy imitation. *Pauper vult videri et EST.* 'Gaulberto' certainly has considerable originality, but sadly wants finishing. It is, as it is, one of the very best in the book. Next to 'Lewti' I like the 'Raven,' which has a good deal of humour. I was pleased to see it again, for you once sent it me, and I have lost the letter which contained it. Now I am on the subject of Anthologies, I must say I am sorry the old Pastoral way has fallen into disrepute. The Gentry which now indite Sonnets are certainly the legitimate descendants of the ancient shepherds. The same simpering face of description, the old family face, is visibly continued in the line. Some of their ancestors' labours are yet to be found in Allan Ramsay's and Jacob Tonson's *Miscellanies*. But, *miscellanies* decaying and the old Pastoral way dying of mere want, their successors (driven from their paternal acres) now-a-days settle and hive upon Magazines and Anthologies. This Race of men are uncommonly addicted to superstition. Some of them are Idolators and worship the Moon. Others deify qualities, as love, friendship, sensibility, or bare accidents, as Solitude. Grief and Melancholy have their respective altars and temples among them, as the heathens builded theirs to Mors, Febris, Pallor. They all agree in ascribing a peculiar sanctity to the number fourteen. One of their own legislators affirmeth, that whatever exceeds that number 'encroacheth upon the province of the Elegy'—*vice versa*, whatever 'cometh short of that number abutteth upon the premises of the Epigram.' I have been able to discover but few *Images* in their temples, which, like the Caves of Delphos of old, are famous for giving *Echoes*. They impute a religious importance to the

letter O, whether because by its roundness it is thought to typify the moon, their principal goddess, or for its analogies to their own labours, all ending where they began; or whatever other high and mystical reference, I have never been able to discover, but I observe they never begin their invocations to their gods without it, except indeed one insignificant sect among them, who use the Doric A, pronounced like Ah! broad, instead. These boast to have restored the old Dorian mood.

Now I am on the subject of poetry, I must announce to you, who, doubtless, in your remote part of the Island, have not heard tidings of so great a blessing, that GEORGE DYER hath prepared two ponderous volumes full of Poetry and Criticism. They impend over the town, and are threatened to fall in the winter. The first volume contains every sort of poetry except personal satire, which George, in his truly original prospectus, renounceth for ever, whimsically foisting the intention in between the price of his book and the proposed number of subscribers. (If I can, I will get you a copy of his *handbill*.) He has tried his *vein* in every species besides—the Spenserian, Thomsonian, Masonic and Akensidish more especially. The second volume is all criticism; wherein he demonstrates to the entire satisfaction of the literary world, in a way that must silence all reply for ever, that the pastoral was introduced by Theocritus and polished by Virgil and Pope—that Gray and Mason (who always hunt in couples in George's brain) have a good deal of poetical fire and true lyric genius—that Cowley was ruined by excess of wit (a warning to all moderns)—that Charles Lloyd, Charles Lamb, and William Wordsworth, in later days, have struck the true chords of poesy. O, George, George, with a head uniformly wrong and a heart uniformly right, that I had power and might equal to my wishes!—then I would call the Gentry of thy native Island, and they should come in troops, flocking at the sound of thy Prospectus Trumpet, and crowding who shall be first to stand in thy List of Subscribers. I can only put twelve shillings into thy pocket (which, I will answer for them, will not stick there long), out of a pocket almost as bare as thine. [*Lamb here erases six lines.*]

Is it not a pity so much fine writing should be erased? But, to tell the truth, I began to scent that I was getting into that sort of style which Longinus and Dionysius Halicarnassus aptly call

'the affected.' But I am suffering from the combined effect of two days' drunkenness, and at such times it is not very easy to think or express in a natural series. The ONLY useful OBJECT of this Letter is to apprise you that on Saturday I shall transmit the PENS by the same coach I sent the Parcel. So enquire them out. You had better write to Godwin *here*, directing your letter to be forwarded to him. I don't know his address. You know your letter must at any rate come to London first. C. L.

['Your satire upon me.' *This Lime-tree Bower my Prison*, where the phrase 'My gentle-hearted Charles' occurs thrice.

'Those nine other wandering maids.' The Muses. A recollection of the *Anti-Jacobin's* verses on Lamb and his friends (see above).

'Your 141st page.' *This Lime-tree Bower* again. By 'unintelligible abstraction-fit' Lamb refers to the passage:

Ah! slowly sink
Behind the western ridge, thou glorious Sun!
Shine in the slant beams of the sinking orb,
Ye purple heath-flowers! richlier burn, ye clouds!
Live in the yellow light, ye distant groves!
And kindle, thou blue Ocean! So my friend
Struck with deep joy may stand, as I have stood,
Silent with swimming sense; yea, gazing round
On the wide landscape, gaze till all doth seem
Less gross than bodily; and of such hues
As veil the Almighty Spirit, when yet He makes
Spirits perceive His presence.

'That scandalous piece of private history.' A reference to Coleridge's *Ode to Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire*, reprinted in the *Annual Anthology* from the *Morning Post*.

'Blenheim.' Southey's ballad, *It was a summer's evening*.

'Pauper vult videri.' The shortest epigram of Martial, viii. 19, is, 'Pauper videri Cinna vult; et est pauper': It wants to be thought poor: and poor it is.

'Gualberto.' The poem *St. Gualberto* by Southey, in the *Annual Anthology*.

'The Raven' was referred to in Lamb's letter of 5th February 1797.

George Dyer's *Poems*, in two volumes, were published in 1800. In my two-volume edition of *Lamb's Letters*, 1912, I quote some passages and characteristic footnotes.

'The pens.' Coleridge seems to have depended on his friends for his writing implements. In a letter to Rickman on 14th March 1804 he says: 'The East India House has very politely made me a present thro' Mr. Charles Lamb, an Eminent in the Indian service, of a hundred or so of pens,' and he goes on to suggest that the House of Commons might supplement this with a gift of sealing wax.]

79. TO THOMAS MANNING

[P.M. 21st August 1800.]

DEAR MANNING,

I am going to ask a favour of you, and am at a loss how to do it in the most delicate manner. For this purpose I have been looking into Pliny's Letters, who is noted to have had the best grace in begging of all the ancients (I read him in the elegant translation of Mr. Melmoth), but not finding any case there exactly similar with mine, I am constrained to beg in my own barbarian way. To come to the point then, and hasten into the middle of things, have you a copy of your Algebra to give away? I do not ask it for myself; I have too much reverence for the Black Arts ever to approach thy circle, illustrious Trismegist! But that worthy man and excellent Poet, George Dyer, made me a visit yesternight, on purpose to borrow one, supposing, rationally enough I must say, that you had made me a present of one before this; the omission of which I take to have proceeded only from negligence; but it is a fault. I could lend him no assistance. You must know he is just now diverted from the pursuit of BELL LETTERS by a paradox, which he has heard his friend Frend (that learned mathematician) maintain, that the negative quantities of mathematicians were *meræ nugæ*, things scarcely in *rerum naturâ*, and smacking too much of mystery for gentlemen of Mr. Frend's clear Unitarian capacity. However, the dispute once set a-going has seized violently on George's pericranick; and it is necessary for his health that he should speedily come to a resolution of his doubts. He goes about teasing his friends with his new mathematics; he even frantically talks of purchasing Manning's Algebra, which shows him far gone, for, to my knowledge, he has not been master of seven shillings a good time. George's pockets and . . .'s brains are two things in nature which do not abhor a vacuum. . . . Now, if you could step in, in this trembling suspense of his reason, and he should find on Saturday morning, lying for him at the Porter's Lodge, Clifford's Inn,—his safest address—Manning's Algebra, with a neat manuscriptum in the blank leaf, running thus, FROM THE AUTHOR! it might save his wits and restore the unhappy author to those studies of

poetry and criticism, which are at present suspended, to the infinite regret of the whole literary world.

N.B.—Dirty books [? backs], smeared leaves, and dogs' ears, will be rather a recommendation than otherwise.

N.B.—He must have the book as soon as possible, or nothing can withhold him from madly purchasing the book on tick. . . . Then shall we see him sweetly restored to the chair of Longinus—to dictate in smooth and modest phrase the laws of verse; to prove that Theocritus first introduced the Pastoral, and Virgil and Pope brought it to its perfection; that Gray and Mason (who always hunt in couples in George's brain) have shown a great deal of poetical fire in their lyric poetry; that Aristotle's rules are not to be servilely followed, which George has shown to have imposed great shackles upon modern genius. His poems, I find, are to consist of two vols.—reasonable octavo; and a third book will exclusively contain criticisms, in which he asserts he has gone *pretty deeply* into the laws of blank verse and rhyme—epic poetry, dramatic and pastoral ditto—all which is to come out before Christmas. But above all he has *touched* most *deeply* upon the Drama, comparing the English with the modern German stage, their merits and defects. Apprehending that his *studies* (not to mention his *turn*, which I take to be chiefly towards the lyrical poetry) hardly qualified him for these disquisitions, I modestly inquired what plays he had read? I found by George's reply that he *had* read Shakspeare, but that was a good while since: he calls him a great but irregular genius, which I think to be an original and just remark. (Beaumont and Fletcher, Massinger, Ben Jonson, Shirley, Marlowe, Ford, and the worthies of Dodsley's Collection—he confessed he had read none of them, but professed his *intention* of looking through them all, so as to be able to *touch* upon them in his book.)

So Shakspeare, Otway, and I believe Rowe, to whom he was naturally directed by Johnson's Lives, and these not read lately, are to stand him in stead of a general knowledge of the subject. God bless his dear absurd head!

By the by, did I not write you a letter with something about an invitation in it?—but let that pass; I suppose it is not agreeable.

N.B. It would not be amiss if you were to accompany your *present* with a dissertation on negative quantities. C. L.

['Mr. Melmoth.' A translation of the *Letters of Pliny the Younger* was made by William Melmoth in 1746.

Trismegistus—thrice greatest—was the term applied to Hermes, the Egyptian philosopher. Manning had written *An Introduction to Arithmetic and Algebra*, 1796, 1798.

'Meræ nugæ': Sheer nonsense.

'... 's brains.' In a later letter Lamb uses Judge Park's wig, when his head is in it, as a simile for emptiness. The dots are in the original, which is in the Huntington Library.]

80. TO S. T. COLERIDGE

August 26th, 1800.

How do you like this little epigram? It is not my writing, nor had I any finger in it. If you concur with me in thinking it very elegant and very original, I shall be tempted to name the author to you. I will just hint that it is almost or quite a first attempt.

HELEN REPENTANT TOO LATE

I

High-born Helen, round your dwelling
These twenty years I've paced in vain:
Haughty beauty, your lover's duty
Has been to glory in his pain.

2

High-born Helen! proudly telling
Stories of your cold disdain;
I starve, I die, now you comply,
And I no longer can complain.

3

These twenty years I've lived on tears,
Dwelling for ever on a frown;
On sighs I've fed, your scorn my bread;
I perish now you kind are grown.

4

Can I, who loved my Beloved
But for the 'scorn was in her eye,'
Can I be moved for my Beloved,
When she 'returns me sigh for sigh?'

5

In stately pride, by my bed-side,
 High-born Helen's portrait's hung;
 Deaf to my praise; my mournful lays
 Are nightly to the portrait sung.

6

To that I weep, nor ever sleep,
 Complaining all night long to her!
Helen, grown old, no longer cold,
Said, 'You to all men I prefer.'

Godwin returned from Wicklow the week before last, tho' he did not reach home till the Sunday after. He might much better have spent that time with you.—But you see your invitation would have been too late. He greatly regrets the occasion he mist of visiting you, but he intends to revisit Ireland in the next summer, and then he will certainly take Keswick in his way. I dined with the Heathen on Sunday.

By-the-by, I have a sort of recollection that somebody, I think *you*, promised me a sight of Wordsworth's Tragedy. I should be very glad of it just now; for I have got Manning with me, and should like to read it *with him*. But this, I confess, is a refinement. Under any circumstances, alone in Cold Bath Prison, or in the desert island, just when Prospero & his crew had set off, with Caliban in a cage, to Milan, it would be a treat to me to read that play. Manning has read it, so has Lloyd, and all Lloyd's family; but I could not get him to betray his trust by giving *me* a sight of it. Lloyd is sadly deficient in some of those virtuous vices. I have just lit upon a most beautiful fiction of hell punishments, by the author of 'Hurlothrumbo,' a mad farce. The inventor imagines that in hell there is a great caldron of hot water, in which a man can scarce hold his finger, and an immense sieve over it, into which the probationary souls are put.

And all the little souls
 Pop through the riddle holes.

Mary's love to Mrs. Coleridge—mine to all.

N.B.—I pays no Postage.—

George Dyer is the only literary character I am happily acquainted with. The oftener I see him, the more deeply I admire

him. He is goodness itself. If I could but calculate the precise date of his death, I would write a novel on purpose to make George the hero. I could hit him off to a hair.

George brought a Dr. Anderson to see me. The Doctor is a very pleasant old man, a great genius for agriculture, one that ties his breeches-knees with Packthread, & boasts of having had disappointments from ministers. The Doctor happened to mention an Epic Poem by one Wilkie, called the 'Epigoniad,' in which he assured us there is not one tolerable line from beginning to end, but all the characters, incidents, &c., are verbally copied from *Homer*. George, who had been sitting quite inattentive to the Doctor's criticism, no sooner heard the sound of *Homer* strike his pericranicks, than up he gets, and declares he must see that poem immediately: where was it to be had? An epic poem of 800 [? 8,000] lines, and *he* not hear of it! There must be some things good in it, and it was necessary he should see it, for he had touched pretty deeply upon that subject in his criticisms on the Epic. George has touched pretty deeply upon the Lyric, I find; he has also prepared a dissertation on the Drama and the comparison of the English and German theatres. As I rather doubted his competency to do the latter, knowing that his peculiar *turn* lies in the lyric species of composition, I questioned George what English plays he had read. I found that he *had* read Shakspeare (whom he calls an original, but irregular, genius), but it was a good while ago; and he has dipt into Rowe and Otway, I suppose having found their names in Johnson's *Lives* at full length; and upon this slender ground he has undertaken the task. He never seem'd even to have heard of Fletcher, Ford, Marlow, Massinger, and the Worthies of Dodsley's *Collection*; but he is to read all these, to prepare him for bringing out his 'Parallel' in the winter. I find he is also determined to vindicate Poetry from the shackles which Aristotle & some others have imposed upon it, which is very good-natured of him, and very necessary just now! Now I am *touching* so *deeply* upon poetry, can I forget that I have just received from Cottle a magnificent copy of his *Guinea Epic*. Four-and-twenty Books to read in the dog-days! I got as far as the Mad Monk the first day, & fainted. Mr. Cottle's genius strongly points him to the *Pastoral*, but his inclinations divert him perpetually from his calling. He

imitates Southey, as Rowe did Shakspeare, with his 'Good morrow to ye; good master Lieut^t.' Instead of *a* man, *a* woman, *a* daughter, he constantly writes one a man, one a woman, one his daughter. Instead of *the* king, *the* hero, he constantly writes, he the king, he the hero—two flowers of rhetoric palpably from the 'Joan.' But Mr. Cottle soars a higher pitch: and when he is original, it is in a most original way indeed. His terrific scenes are indefatigable. Serpents, asps, spiders, ghosts, dead bodies, staircases made of nothing, with adders' tongues for bannisters—My God! what a brain he must have! He puts as many plums in his pudding as my Grandmother used to do; and then his emerging from Hell's horrors into Light, and treading on pure flats of this earth for 23 Books together!

C. L.

[The little epigram was by Mary Lamb. It was printed first in the *John Woodvil* volume in 1802; and again, in a footnote to Lamb's essay, 'Blakesmoor in H—shire,' 1824.

Godwin's return was from his visit to Curran. Coleridge had asked him to break his journey at Keswick.

'Wordsworth's Tragedy.' *The Borderers*.

'Hurlothrumbo.' An opera of 1729, written by Johnson, a dancing master.

'I would write a novel.' Lamb returns to this idea, but he never carried it out. The loss is ours.

One of Dyer's printed criticisms of Shakespeare, in his *Poetics*, some years later might be quoted: 'Shakespeare had the inward clothing of a fine mind; the outward covering of solid reading, of critical observation, and the richest eloquence; and compared with these, what are the trappings of the schools?'

'Cottle's Guinea Epic' would be *Alfred, an Epic Poem*, by Joseph Cottle, the publisher.

For Dr. Anderson see the note to the next letter.]

81. TO THOMAS MANNING

[P.M. 28th August 1800.]

George Dyer is an Archimedes, and an Archimagus, and a Tycho Brahé, and a Copernicus; and thou art the darling of the Nine, and midwife to their wandering babe also! We take tea with that learned poet and critic on Tuesday night, at half-past five, in his neat library; the repast will be light and Attic, with criticism. If thou couldst contrive to wheel up thy dear carcase

on the Monday, and after dining with us on tripe, calves' kidneys, or whatever else the Cornucopia of St. Clare may be willing to pour out on the occasion, might we not adjourn together to the Heathen's—thou with thy Black Backs [? Books] and I with some innocent volume of the Bell Letters—Shenstone, or the like? It would make him wash his old flannel gown (that has not been washed to my knowledge since it has been *his*—Oh the long time!) with tears of joy. Thou shouldst settle his scruples and unravel his cobwebs, and sponge off the sad stuff that weighs upon his dear wounded *pia mater*; thou shouldst restore light to his eyes, and him to his friends and the public; Parnassus should shower her civic crowns upon thee for saving the wits of a citizen! I thought I saw a lucid interval in George the other night—he broke in upon my studies just at tea-time, and brought with him Dr. Anderson, an old gentleman who ties his breeches' knees with packthread, and boasts that he has been disappointed by ministers. The Doctor wanted to see *me*; for, I being a Poet, he thought I might furnish him with a copy of verses to suit his 'Agricultural Magazine.' The Doctor, in the course of the conversation, mentioned a poem called 'Epigoniad' by one Wilkie, an epic poem, in which there is not one tolerable good line all through, but every incident and speech borrowed from Homer. George had been sitting inattentive seemingly to what was going on—hatching of negative quantities—when, suddenly, the name of his old friend Homer stung his pericranicks, and, jumping up, he begged to know where he could meet with Wilkie's work. 'It was a curious fact that there should be such an epic poem and he not know of it: and he *must* get a copy of it, as he was going to touch pretty deeply upon the subject of the Epic—and he was sure there must be some things good in a poem of 1400 lines!' I was pleased with this transient return of his reason and recurrence to his old ways of thinking: it gave me great hopes of a recovery, which nothing but your book can completely insure.

Pray come on Monday if you *can*, and stay your own time. I have a good large room, with two beds in it, in the handsomest of which thou shalt repose a-nights, and dream of Spheroides. I hope you will understand by the nonsense of this letter that I am *not* melancholy at the thoughts of thy coming: I thought it necessary to add this, because you love *precision*. Take notice

that our stay at Dyer's will not exceed eight o'clock, after which our pursuits will be our own. But indeed I think a little recreation among the Bell Letters and poetry will do you some service in the interval of severer studies. I hope we shall fully discuss with George Dyer what I have never yet heard done to my satisfaction, the reason of Dr. Johnson's malevolent strictures on the higher species of the Ode.

['Bell Letters.' Alluding to John Bell (1745-1831), the printer and publisher chiefly of the British poets.

Dr. Anderson was James Anderson (1739-1808), the editor, at that time, of *Recreations in Agriculture, Natural History, Arts, and Miscellaneous History*, published in monthly parts. Lamb gave him a copy of verses—three extracts from *John Woodvil* which were printed in the number for November 1800, as being 'from an unpublished drama by C. Lamb.' They were the *Description of a Forest Life*, *The General Lover* ('What is it you love?') and *Fragment or Dialogue*, better known as *The Dying Lover*. All have slight variations from other versions. The most striking is the epithet 'lubbar bands of sleep,' instead of 'lazy bands of sleep,' in the *Description of a Forest Life*.

Wilkie was William Wilkie (1721-72), the 'Scottish Homer,' whose *Epigoniad* in nine books, based on the fourth book of the *Iliad*, was published in 1757.

Dr. Johnson's strictures were chiefly directed against the odes of Gray, whom he disliked, and who called him 'Ursa Major.']

82. TO THOMAS MANNING

[P.M. 22nd September 1800.]

DEAR MANNING,

You needed not imagine any apology necessary. Your fine hare and fine birds (which just now are dangling by our kitchen blaze) discourse most eloquent music in your justification. You just nicked my palate. For, with all due decorum and leave may it be spoken, my worship hath taken physic for his body to-day, and being low and puling, requireth to be pampered. Foh! how beautiful and strong those buttered onions come to my nose! For you must know we extract a divine spirit of gravy from those materials which, duly compounded with a consistence of bread and cream (y'clept bread-sauce), each to each giving double grace, do mutually illustrate and set off (as skilful goldfoils to rare jewels) your partridge, pheasant, woodcock, snipe, teal,

widgeon, and the other lesser daughters of the ark. My friendship, struggling with my carnal and fleshly prudence (which suggests that a bird a man is the proper allotment in such cases), yearneth sometimes to have thee here to pick a wing or so. I question if your Norfolk sauces match our London culinaric.

George Dyer has introduced me to the table of an agreeable old gentleman, Dr. Anderson, who gives hot legs of mutton and grape pies at his sylvan lodge at Isleworth, where, in the middle of a street, he has shot up a wall most preposterously before his small dwelling, which, with the circumstance of his taking several panes of glass out of bedroom windows (for air), causeth his neighbours to speculate strangely on the state of the good man's pericranicks. Plainly, he lives under the reputation of being deranged. George does not mind this circumstance; he rather likes him the better for it. The Doctor, in his pursuits, joins agricultural to poetical science, and has set George's brains mad about the old Scotch writers, Barbour, Douglas's *Æneid*, Blind Harry, &c. We returned home in a return postchaise (having dined with the Doctor), and George kept wondering and wondering, for eight or nine turnpike miles, what was the name, and striving to recollect the name, of a poet anterior to Barbour. I begged to know what was remaining of his works. 'There is nothing *extant* of his works, Sir, but by all accounts he seems to have been a fine genius!' This fine genius, without anything to show for it or any title beyond George's courtesy, without even a name! and Barbour, and Douglas, and Blind Harry, now are the predominant sounds in George's *pia mater*, and their buzzings exclude politics, criticism, and algebra—the late lords of that illustrious lumber-room. Mark, he has never read any of these bucks, but is impatient till he reads them *all* at the Doctor's suggestion. Poor Dyer! his friends should be careful what sparks they let fall into such inflammable matter.

Could I have my will of the heathen, I would lock him up from all access of new ideas; I would exclude all critics that would not swear me first (upon their Virgil) that they would feed him with nothing but the old, safe, familiar notions and sounds (the rightful aborigines of his brain)—Gray, Akenside and Mason. In these sounds, reiterated as often as possible, there could be nothing painful, nothing distracting.

God bless me, here are the birds, smoking hot!
all that is gross and unspiritual in me rises at the sight!
Avaunt friendship! and all memory of absent friends!

C. LAMB.

['Divine spirit of gravity.' This passage is the first of Lamb's outbursts of gustatory ecstasy, afterwards to become frequent in his writings; while in the letter that follows we find him, although only twenty-five, in his richest mood of comedy.

John Barbour (1316-95), author of *Bruce*: Gavin Douglas (1474-1522), author of two allegories, *The Palace of Honour* and *King Hart*, and translator of the *Æneid*.]

83. TO S. T. COLERIDGE

Oct. 9th, 1800.

I suppose you have heard of the death of Amos Cottle. I paid a solemn visit of condolence to his brother, accompanied by George Dyer, of burlesque memory. I went, trembling to see poor Cottle so immediately upon the event. He was in black; and his younger brother was also in black. Every thing wore an aspect suitable to the respect due to the freshly dead. For some time after our entrance, nobody spake till George modestly put in a question, whether *Alfred* was likely to sell. This was Lethe to Cottle, and his poor face wet with tears, and his kind eye brightened up in a moment. Now I felt it was my cue to speak. I had to thank him for a present of a magnificent copy, and had promised to send him my remarks,—the least thing I could do; so I ventured to suggest, that I perceived a considerable improvement he had made in his first book since the state in which he first read it to me. Joseph, who till now had sat with his knees cowering in by the fire-place, wheeled about, and with great difficulty of body shifted the same round to the corner of a table where I was sitting, and first stationing one thigh over the other, which is his sedentary mood, and placidly fixing his benevolent face right against mine, waited my observations. At that moment it came strongly into my mind, that I had got Uncle Toby before me, he looked so kind and so good. I could not say an unkind thing of *Alfred*. So I set my memory to work to recollect what was the name of Alfred's Queen, and with some adroitness recalled the well-known sound to Cottle's ears of Alswitha. At that

moment I could perceive that Cottle had forgot his brother was so lately become a blessed spirit. In the language of mathematicians the author was as 9, the brother as 1. I felt my cue, and strong pity working at the root, I went to work, and beslabber'd *Alfred* with most unqualified praise, or only qualifying my praise by the occasional politic interposition of an exception taken against trivial faults, slips, and human imperfections, which, by removing the appearance of insincerity, did but in truth heighten the relish. Perhaps I might have spared that refinement, for Joseph was in a humour to hope and believe *all things*. What I said was beautifully supported, corroborated, and confirmed by the stupidity of his brother on my left hand, and by George on my right, who has an utter incapacity of comprehending that there can be any thing bad in poetry. All poems are *good* poems to George; all men are *fine geniuses*. So what with my actual memory, of which I made the most, and Cottle's own helping me out, for I *really* had forgotten a good deal of *Alfred*, I made shift to discuss the most essential parts entirely to the satisfaction of its author, who repeatedly declared that he loved nothing better than *candid* criticism. Was I a candid greyhound now for all this? or did I do right? I believe I did. The effect was luscious to my conscience. For all the rest of the evening Amos was no more heard of, till George revived the subject by inquiring whether some account should not be drawn up by the friends of the deceased to be inserted in Phillips's Monthly Obituary; adding, that Amos was estimable both for his head and heart, and would have made a fine poet if he had lived. To the expediency of this measure Cottle fully assented, but could not help adding that he always thought that the qualities of his brother's heart exceeded those of his head. I believe his brother, when living, had formed precisely the same idea of him; and I apprehend the world will assent to both judgments. I rather guess that the Brothers were poetical rivals. I judged so when I saw them together. Poor Cottle, I must leave him, after his short dream, to muse again upon his poor brother, for whom I am sure in secret he will yet shed many a tear. Now send me in return some Greta news.

C. L.

[The Cottles were from Bristol. Amos Simon Cottle, whose chief work was *Icelandic Poetry*, 1797, died at Clifford's Inn, where he was George Dyer's

neighbour, on 28th September 1800, aged thirty-two. Joseph, who had been a bookseller at Bristol, retired in 1799 to become an author. His epic of *Alfred* was not published till 1801, but Lamb would have seen specimens of it. His *Early Recollections, chiefly relating to Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, 1837, has much curious matter, but it is very inaccurate.

'Uncle Toby.' In *Tristram Shandy*.

'A candid greyhound.' Probably a confused memory of Hotspur's lines in *1 Henry IV*:

Why, what a candy deal of courtesy

This fawning greyhound then did proffer me!]

84. TO THOMAS MANNING

[P.M. 16th October 1800.]

DEAR MANNING,

Had you written one week before you did, I certainly should have obeyed your injunction; you should have seen me before my letter. I will explain to you my situation. There are six of us in one department. Two of us (within these four days) are confined with severe fevers; and two more, who belong to the Tower Militia, expect to have marching orders on Friday. Now six are absolutely necessary. I have already asked and obtained two young hands to supply the loss of the *Feverites*; and, with the other prospect before me, you may believe I cannot decently ask leave of absence for myself. All I can promise (and I do promise with the sincerity of *Saint Peter*, and the contrition of *Sinner Peter* if I fail) that I will come *the very first spare week*, and go nowhere till I have been at Camb. No matter if you are in a state of pupilage when I come; for I can employ myself in Cambridge very pleasantly in the mornings. Are there not Libraries, Halls, Colleges, Books, Pictures, Statues?

I wish to God you had made London in your way. There is an exhibition quite uncommon in Europe, which could not have escaped *your genius*,—a LIVE RATTLESNAKE, 10 feet in length, and the thickness of a big leg. I went to see it last night by candlelight. We were ushered into a room very little bigger than ours at Pentonville. A man and woman and four boys live in this room, joint tenants with nine snakes, most of them such as no remedy has been discovered for their bite. We walked into the middle, which is formed by a half-moon of wired boxes,

all mansions of *snakes*,—whip-snakes, thunder-snakes, pig-nose-snakes, American vipers, and *this monster*. He lies curled up in folds; and immediately a stranger enters (for he is used to the family, and sees them play at cards,) he set up a rattle like a watchman's in London, or near as loud, and reared up a head, from the midst of these folds, like a toad, and shook his head, and showed every sign a snake can show of irritation. I had the foolish curiosity to strike the wires with my finger, and the devil flew at me with his toad-mouth wide open: the inside of his mouth is quite white. I had got my finger away, nor could he well have bit me with his damn'd big mouth, which would have been certain death in five minutes. But it frightened me so much, that I did not recover my voice for a minute's space. I forgot, in my fear, that he was secured. You would have forgot too, for 'tis incredible how such a monster can be confined in small gauzy-looking wires. I dreamed of snakes in the night. I wish to heaven you could see it. He absolutely swelled with passion to the bigness of a large thigh. I could not retreat without infringing on another box, and just behind, a little devil not an inch from my back, had got his nose out, with some difficulty and pain, quite through the bars! He was soon taught better manners. All the snakes were curious, and objects of terror: but this monster, like Aaron's serpent, swallowed up the impression of the rest. He opened his damn'd mouth, when he made at me, as wide as his head was broad. I hallooed out quite loud, and felt pains all over my body with the fright.

I have had the felicity of hearing George Dyer read out one book of 'The Farmer's Boy.' I thought it rather childish. No doubt, there is originality in it, (which, in your self-taught geniuses, is a most rare quality, they generally getting hold of some bad models in a scarcity of books, and forming their taste on them,) but no *selection*. All is described.

Mind, I have only heard read one book.

Yours sincerely,

Philo-Snake,

C. L.

[*The Farmer's Boy*, by Robert Bloomfield, was published in March 1800, and was immensely popular. Other criticisms upon it by Lamb will be found in this work.

Lamb's visit to Cambridge was deferred until 5th January 1801.]

85. TO THOMAS MANNING

[P.M. 3rd November 1800.]

Ecquid meditatur Archimedes? What is Euclid doing? What has happened to learned Trismegist?—Doth he take it in ill part, that his humble friend did not comply with his courteous invitation? Let it suffice, I could not come—are impossibilities nothing—be they abstractions of the intellects or not (rather) most sharp and mortifying realities? nuts in the Will's mouth too hard for her to crack? brick and stone walls in her way, which she can by no means eat through? sore lets, *impedimenta viarum*, no thoroughfares? *racemi nimum alte pendentes*? Is the phrase classic? I allude to the grapes in Æsop, which cost the fox a strain, and gained the world an aphorism. Observe the superscription of this letter. In adapting the size of the letters, which constitute *your* name and Mr. *Crisp's* name respectively, I had an eye to your different stations in life. 'Tis really curious, and must be soothing to an *aristocrat*. I wonder it has never been hit on before my time.

I have made an acquisition latterly of a *pleasant hand*, one Rickman, to whom I was introduced by George Dyer, not the most flattering auspices under which one man can be introduced to another. George brings all sorts of people together, setting up a sort of agrarian law, or common property, in matter of society; but for once he has done me a great pleasure, while he was only pursuing a principle, as *ignes fatui* may light you home. This Rickman lives in our Buildings, immediately opposite our house; the finest fellow to drop in a' nights, about nine or ten o'clock—cold bread-and-cheese time—just in the *wishing* time of the night, when you *wish* for somebody to come in, without a distinct idea of a probable anybody. Just in the nick, neither too early to be tedious, nor too late to sit a reasonable time. He is a most pleasant hand: a fine rattling fellow, has gone through life laughing at solemn apes; himself hugely literate, oppressively full of information in all stuff of conversation, from matter of fact to Xenophon and Plato—can talk Greek with Porson, politics with Thelwall, conjecture with George Dyer, nonsense with me, and anything with anybody: a great farmer, somewhat concerned

in an agricultural magazine—reads no poetry but Shakspeare, very intimate with Southey, but never reads his poetry: relishes George Dyer, thoroughly penetrates into the ridiculous wherever found, understands the *first time* (a great desideratum in common minds)—you need never twice speak to him; does not want explanations, translations, limitations, as Professor Godwin does when you make an assertion: *up* to anything, *down* to everything—whatever *sapit hominem*. A perfect *man*. All this farrago, which must perplex you to read, and has put me to a little trouble to *select*, only proves how impossible it is to describe a *pleasant hand*. You must see Rickman to know him, for he is a species in one. A new class. An exotic, any slip of which I am proud to put in my garden-pot. The clearest-headed fellow. Fullest of matter with least verbosity. If there be any alloy in my fortune to have met with such a man, it is that he commonly divides his time between town and country, having some foolish family ties at Christchurch, by which means he can only gladden our London hemisphere with returns of light. He is now going for six weeks.

At last I have written to Kemble, to know the event of my play, which was presented last Christmas. As I suspected, came an answer back that the copy was lost, and could not be found—no hint that anybody had to this day ever looked into it—with a courteous (reasonable!) request of another copy (if I had one by me,) and a promise of a definite answer in a week. I could not resist so facile and moderate a demand, so scribbled out another, omitting sundry things, such as the witch story, about half of the forest scene (which is too leisurely for story), and transposing that damn'd soliloquy about England getting drunk, which, like its reciter, stupidly stood alone, nothing prevenient or antevenient, and cleared away a good deal besides; and sent this copy, written *all out* (with alterations, &c., *requiring judgment*) in one day and a half! I sent it last night, and am in weekly expectation of the rolling-bell and death-warrant.

This is all my Lunnon news. Send me some from the *banks of Cam*, as the poets delight to speak, especially George Dyer, who has no other name, nor idea, nor definition of Cambridge: namely, its being a market-town, sending members to Parliament, never entered into his definition: it was and is, simply, the banks of

the Cam or the fair Cam, as Oxford is the banks of the Isis or the fair Isis. Yours in all humility, most illustrious Trismegist,
C. LAMB.

(Read on; there's more at the bottom.)

You ask me about the 'Farmer's Boy'—don't you think the fellow who wrote it (who is a shoemaker) has a poor mind? Don't you find he is always silly about *poor Giles*, and those abject kind of phrases, which mark a man that looks up to wealth? None of Burns's poet-dignity. What do you think? I have just opened him; but he makes me sick. Dyer knows the shoemaker (a damn'd stupid hound in company); but George promises to introduce him indiscriminately to all friends and all combinations.

[The Latin tags at the beginning of the letter are difficult to trace, but they mean:

'*Ecquid meditatur Archimedes?*': Has Archimedes any plans?

'*Impedimenta viarum*': Obstructions on the roads.

'*Racemi nimium alte pendent*': Branches hanging too high.

Mr. Crisp was Manning's landlord, a barber in St. Mary's Passage, Cambridge. In one letter at least Lamb spells his name Crips—a joke he was fond of.

'Rickman' was John Rickman (1771-1840), already a friend of Southey's, whom he had met at Burton, near Christchurch, in Hampshire, where Rickman's father lived. A graduate of Lincoln College, Oxford, he was at this time living in Southampton Buildings, adjacent to Lamb, and about to become secretary to Charles Abbot, afterwards Lord Colchester. Rickman had conducted the *Commercial, Agricultural, and Manufacturer's Magazine*, and he was practically the originator of the census in England. We shall meet with him often in the correspondence.

'A pleasant hand.' It is rather curious that in his letter to Southey, on 30th December 1800, telling of his new acquaintance, Rickman says: 'I have a very pleasant neighbour opposite, C. Lamb.' By opposite he means in Chancery Lane. Southey, who had known Rickman since 1797, would probably have arranged the introduction.

'*Wishing time of night.*' A variation on Hamlet's 'witching time of night,' *III. ii.* 406.

'*Sapit hominem.*' '*Hominem pagina nostra sapit*': Smacks of men.—*Martial*, x. 4.

George Daniel, the antiquary and bookseller, tells us that many years later he took Bloomfield to dine with Lamb at Islington.]

86. TO THOMAS MANNING

[P.M. 28th November 1800.]

DEAR MANNING,

I have received a very kind invitation from Lloyd and Sophia to go and spend a month with them at the Lakes. Now it fortunately happens (which is so seldom the case!) that I have spare cash by me, enough to answer the expenses of so long a journey; and I am determined to get away from the office by some means. The purpose of this letter is to request of you (my dear friend) that you will not take it unkind if I decline my proposed visit to Cambridge *for the present*. Perhaps I shall be able to take Cambridge *in my way*, going or coming. I need not describe to you the expectations which such an one as myself pent up all my life in a dirty city, have formed of a tour to the Lakes. Consider Grasmere! Ambleside! Wordsworth! Coleridge! I hope you will.* Hills, woods, lakes, and mountains, to the eternal devil. I will eat snipes with thee, Thomas Manning. Only confess, confess, a *bite*.

P.S. I think you named the 16th; but was it not modest of Lloyd to send such an invitation! It shows his knowledge of *money* and *time*. I would be loth to think he meant

Ironic satire sidelong sklentend
On my poor pурсie.—BURNS.

For my part, with reference to my friends northward, I must confess that I am not romance-bit about *Nature*. The earth, and sea, and sky (when all is said) is but as a house to dwell in. If the inmates be courteous, and good liquors flow like the conduits at an old coronation; if they can talk sensibly and feel properly; I have no need to stand staring upon the gilded looking-glass (that strained my friend's purse-strings in the purchase), nor his five-shilling print over the mantelpiece of old Nabbs the carrier (which only betrays his false taste). Just as important to me (in a sense) is all the furniture of my world—eye-pampering, but satisfies no heart. Streets, streets, streets, markets, theatres, churches, Covent Gardens, shops sparkling with pretty faces of industrious milliners, neat sempstresses, ladies cheapening, gentlemen behind counters lying, authors in the street with

spectacles, George Dyers (you may know them by their gait), lamps lit at night, pastry-cooks' and silver-smiths' shops, beautiful Quakers of Pentonville, noise of coaches, drowsy cry of mechanic watchmen at night, with bucks reeling home drunk; if you happen to wake at midnight, cries of Fire and Stop thief; inns of court, with their learned air, and halls, and butteries, just like Cambridge colleges; old book-stalls, Jeremy Taylors, Burtons on Melancholy, and Religio Medicis on every stall. These are thy pleasures, O London with-the-many-sins. O City abounding in whores, for these may Keswick and her giant brood go hang!

C. L.

[Charles Lloyd had just settled at Old Brathay, about three miles from Ambleside.

Manning's reply to this letter indicates that Lamb's story of the invitation to stay with Lloyd was a hoax. The first page ended, as in the letter to Gutch, where I have put the asterisk. Manning writes: 'N.B. Your Lake story completely took me in till I got to the 2d page. I was pleased to think you were so rich, but I confess rather wondered how you should be able conveniently to take so long a journey this inside-fare time of the year.'

Manning also says: 'I condole with you, Mr. Lamb, on the tragic fate of your tragedie—I wonder what fool it was that read it! By the bye, you would do me a very very great favour by letting me have a copy. If Beggars might be chusers, I should ask to have it transcribed partly by you and partly by your sister. I have a desire to possess some of Mary's handwriting.'

'Beautiful Quakers of Pentonville.' This is almost certainly a reference to Hester Savory, the original of Lamb's poem *Hester*. The whole passage is the first of three eulogies of London in the letters, all very similar. To *The Londoner* we come later.]

87. TO WILLIAM GODWIN

[No date: ? 4th December 1800.]

DEAR SIR,

I send this speedily after the heels of Cooper (O! the dainty expression) to say that Mary is obliged to stay at home on Sunday to receive a female friend, from whom I am equally glad to escape. So that we shall be by ourselves. I write, because it may make *some* difference in your marketting, &c.

C. L.

Thursday Morning.

1800

WILLIAM GODWIN

I am sorry to put you to the expense of twopence postage. But I calculate thus: if Mary comes she will

| | | |
|--|---------|------------------|
| eat Beef 2 plates, | 4d. | |
| Batter Pudding 1 do. . . . | 2d. | |
| Beer, a pint, | 2d. | |
| Wine, 3 glasses, | 11d. | I drink no wine! |
| Chesnuts, after dinner, . . . | 2d. | |
| Tea and supper at moderate calcu- lation, | 9d. | |
| | <hr/> | |
| | 2s. 6d. | |
| From which deduct | 2d. | postage |
| | <hr/> | |
| | 2s. 4d. | |

You are a clear gainer by her not coming.

Thursday Morning.

[If the date be correct, this becomes the first extant letter proper which Lamb sent to the author of *Political Justice*. Godwin was then forty-four years old, and had long been busy upon his tragedy *Antonio*, in which Lamb had been assisting with suggestions.

Cooper was Godwin's servant.]

88. TO WILLIAM GODWIN

Dec. 10th, 1800.

Wednesday Morning.

DEAR SIR,

I expected a good deal of pleasure from your company to-morrow, but I am sorry I must beg of you to excuse me. I have been confined ever since I saw you with one of the severest colds I ever experienced, occasioned by being in the night air on Sunday, and on the following day, very foolishly. I am neither in health nor spirits to meet company. I hope and trust I shall get out on Saturday night. You will add to your many favours, by transmitting to me as early as possible as many tickets as conveniently you can spare,—Yours truly,

C. L.

I have been plotting how to abridge the Epilogue. But I

cannot see that any lines can be spared, retaining the connection, except these two, which are better out.

Why should I instance, &c.,
The sick man's purpose, &c.,

and then the following line must run thus,

The truth by an example best is shown.

Excuse this *important* postscript.

89. TO THOMAS MANNING

[P.M. 13th December 1800.]

Don't spill the cream upon this letter.

I have received your letter *this moment*, not having been at the office. I have just time to scribble down the epilogue. To your epistle I will just reply, that I will certainly come to Cambridge before January is out: I'll come *when I can*. You shall have an amended copy of my play early next week. Mary thanks you; but her handwriting is too feminine to be exposed to a Cambridge gentleman, though I endeavour to persuade her that you understand algebra, and must understand her hand. The play is the man's you wot of; but for God's sake (who would not like to have so pious a *professor's* work *damn'd*) do not mention it—it is to come out in a feigned name, as one Tobin's. I will omit the introductory lines which connect it with the play, and give you the concluding tale, which is the mass and bulk of the epilogue. The *name* is *Jack INCIDENT*. It is about promise-breaking—you will see it all, if you read the *papers*.

Jack, of dramatic genius justly vain,
Purchased a renter's share at Drury-lane;
A prudent man in every other matter,
Known at his club-room for an honest hatter;
Humane and courteous, led a civil life,
And has been seldom known to beat his wife;
But Jack is now grown quite another man,
Frequents the green-room, knows the plot and plan
Of each new piece,
And has been seen to talk with Sheridan!

In at the play-house just at six he pops,
 And never quits it till the curtain drops,
 Is never absent on the *author's night*,
 Knows actresses and actors too—by sight;
 So humble, that with Suett he'll confer,
 Or take a pipe with plain Jack Bannister;
 Nay, with an author has been known so free,
 He once suggested a catastrophe—
 In short, John dabbled till his head was turn'd;
 His wife remonstrated, his neighbours mourn'd,
 His customers were dropping off apace,
 And Jack's affairs began to wear a piteous face.

One night his wife began a curtain lecture;
 'My dearest Johnny, husband, spouse, protector,
 Take pity on your helpless babes and me,
 Save us from ruin, you from bankruptcy—
 Look to your business, leave these cursed plays,
 And try again your old industrious ways.'

Jack who was always scared at the Gazette,
 And had some bits of skull uninjured yet,
 Promised amendment, vow'd his wife spake reason,
 'He would not see another play that season—'

Three stubborn fortnights Jack his promise kept,
 Was late and early in his shop, ate, slept,
 And walk'd and talk'd, like ordinary men;
 No wit, but John the hatter once again—
 Visits his club: when lo! one *fatal night*
 His wife with horror view'd the well-known sight—
 John's *bat*, *wig*, *snuff-box*—well she knew his tricks—
 And Jack decamping at the hour of six,
 Just at the counter's edge a playbill lay,
 Announcing that 'Pizarro' was the play—
 'O Johnny, Johnny, this is your old doing.'
 Quoth Jack, 'Why what the devil storm's a-brewing?
 About a harmless play why all this fright?
 I'll go and see it if it's but for spite—
 Zounds, woman! Nelson's ¹ to be there to-night.'

N.B.—This was intended for Jack Bannister to speak; but the sage managers have chosen Miss *Heard*,—except Miss Tidswell, the worst actress ever seen or *heard*. Now, I remember I have promised the loan of my play. I will lend it *instantly*, and you shall get it ('pon honour!) by this day week.

¹ A good clap-trap. Nelson has exhibited two or three times at both theatres—and advertised himself.

I must go and dress for the boxes! First night! Finding I have time, I transcribe the rest. Observe, you have read the last first; it begins thus:—the names I took from a little outline G. gave me. I have not read the play.

'Ladies, ye've seen how Guzman's consort died,
 Poor victim of a Spaniard brother's pride,
 When Spanish honour through the world was blown,
 And Spanish beauty for the best was known.¹
 In that romantic, unenlighten'd time,
 A *breach of promise* ² was a sort of crime—
 Which of you handsome English ladies here,
 But deems the penance bloody and severe?
 A whimsical old Saragossa ³ fashion,
 That a dead father's dying inclination,
 Should *live* to thwart a living daughter's passion,⁴
 Unjustly on the sex we ⁵ men exclaim,
 Rail at *your* ⁶ vices,—and commit the same;—
 Man is a promise-breaker from the womb,
 And goes a promise-breaker to the tomb—
 What need we instance here the lover's vow,
 The sick man's purpose, or the great man's bow? ⁷
 The truth by few examples best is shown—
 Instead of many which are better known,
 Take poor Jack Incident, that's dead and gone.
 Jack,' &c. &c. &c.

Now you have it all—how do you like it? I am going to hear it recited!!! C. L.

[‘As one Tobin’s.’ The rehearsals of *Antonio* were attended by Godwin’s friend, John Tobin, subsequently author of *The Honeymoon*, in the hope, on account of Godwin’s reputation for heterodoxy, of deceiving people as to the real authorship of the play. It was, however, avowed by Godwin on the title-page.

Jack Bannister, the comedian, was a favourite actor of Lamb’s. See the *Elia* essay ‘On some of the Old Actors.’

Miss Heard was a daughter of William Heard, the author of *The Snuff-Box*, a feeble comedy. Miss Tidswell, by the irony of fate, had a part in Lamb’s own play, *Mr. H.*, six years later.

‘I have not read the play.’ Not, that is, its final form. Lamb must have read it in earlier versions.

I quote the plot of *Antonio* from the *Life of Godwin* by C. Kegan Paul:

Helena was betrothed, with her father’s consent, to her brother Antonio’s

¹ Four easy lines. ² For which the heroine died. ³ In Spain!!

⁴ Two neat lines. ⁵ Or you. ⁶ Or our, as they have altered it. ⁷ Antithesis.

friend, Roderigo. While Antonio and Roderigo were at the wars, Helena fell in love with, and married, Don Gusman. She was the king's ward, who set aside the pre-contract. Antonio, returning, leaves his friend behind; he has had great sorrows, but all will be well when he comes to claim his bride. When Antonio finds his sister is married, the rage he exhibits is ferocious. He carries his sister off from her husband's house, and demands that the king shall annul the marriage with Gusman. There is then talk of Helena's entrance into a convent. At last the king, losing patience, gives judgment, as he had done before, that the pre-contract with Roderigo was invalid, and the marriage to Gusman valid. Whereupon Antonio bursts through the guards and kills his sister.

Antonio, I should interpose, was produced on Saturday, 13th December 1800, and lamentably failed. I quote the *Morning Post* of Monday the 15th:

A new tragedy, entitled *Antonio, or The Soldier's Return*, was performed here on Saturday night, in presence of a crowded and brilliant circle. There are so very few modern instances of excellence in this species of dramatic composition, that we do not believe that it had excited much expectation. Some hopes, however, must have been conceived from a play in which the female department could not have been filled with more splendid talent—for it was exclusively confined to Mrs. Siddons—and in which Mr. Kemble, the hero of the piece, sustained the greater part of its burthen. These advantages, supported by the sound acting of Mr. Barrymore and Mr. Wroughton, who filled the only remaining situations that deserve the name of character, could not save the piece from condemnation. . . .

If it had been the object of the author to have rendered the spirit of honour odious and disgusting, he could not have chosen a better personification of it than Antonio. The construction of the piece is still more defective than the character. The stage presents an uniformly naked appearance, never displaying until the last minute more than two characters at a time; thus the dialogue is carried on through a dull series of *iêtes-à-iêtes*, without incident, or variety in sentiment, or scene. From the declamatory style and parade of the two first acts, the audience bore it patiently, expecting to be astonished with something greater in the sequel: but, in proportion as this hope began to lose ground with the progress of the performance, the disapproval gradually became general, and finally so great that Mr. Barrymore was not suffered to announce its further representation. A prologue and epilogue were spoken by Mr. C. Kemble and Miss Heard; both productions well suited to the piece, too bad to pass without censure, except when they pass without observation.]

[I place here, to keep the story of *Antonio* in order, Lamb's letter of 16th December to Manning, relating the humours of the first night:]

90. TO THOMAS MANNING

Dec. 16th, 1800.

We are damned!

Not the facetious epilogue could save us. For, as the editor of the 'Morning Post,' quick-sighted gentleman! hath this morning truly observed, (I beg pardon if I falsify his words, their profound sense I am sure I retain,) both prologue and epilogue were worthy of accompanying such a piece; and indeed (mark the profundity, Mister Manning) were received with proper indignation by such of the audience only as thought either worth attending to. PROFESSOR, thy glories wax dim. . . . Again, the incomparable author of the 'True Briton' declared in his paper (bearing same date) that the epilogue was an indifferent attempt at humour and character, and failed in both. I forbear to mention the other papers, because I have not read them. O PROFESSOR, how different thy feelings now (*quantum mutatus ab illo professore, qui in agris philosophia tantas victorias acquisivisti*),—how different thy proud feelings but one little week ago,—thy anticipation of thy nine nights,—those visionary claps, which have soothed thy soul by day and thy dreams by night! Calling in accidentally on the Professor while he was out, I was ushered into the study; and my nose quickly (most sagacious always) pointed me to four tokens lying loose upon thy table, Professor, which indicated thy violent and satanical pride of heart. Imprimis, there caught mine eye a list of six persons, thy friends, whom thou didst meditate inviting to a sumptuous dinner on the Thursday, anticipating the profits of thy Saturday's play to answer charges; I was in the honoured file! Next, a stronger evidence of thy violent and almost satanical pride, lay a list of all the morning papers (from the 'Morning Chronicle' downwards to the 'Porcupine,') with the places of their respective offices, where thou wast meditating to insert, and didst insert, an elaborate sketch of the story of thy play—stones in thy enemy's hand to bruise thee with; and severely wast thou bruised, O Professor! nor do I know what oil to pour into thy wounds. Next, which convinced me to a dead conviction of thy pride, violent and almost satanical pride—lay a list of books, which thy un-tragedy-favoured pocket could never

answer; Dodsley's Old Plays, Malone's Shakspeare (still harping upon thy play, thy philosophy abandoned meanwhile to Christians and superstitious minds); nay, I believe (if I can believe my memory), that the ambitious Encyclopædia itself was part of thy meditated acquisitions; but many a playbook was there. All these visions are *damned*; and thou, Professor, must read Shakspeare in future out of a common edition; and, hark ye, pray read him to a little better purpose! Last and strongest against thee (in colours manifest as the hand upon Belshazzar's wall), lay a volume of poems by C. Lloyd and C. Lamb. Thy heart misgave thee, that thy assistant might possibly not have talent enough to furnish thee an epilogue! Manning, all these things came over my mind; all the gratulations that would have thickened upon him, and even some have glanced aside upon his humble friend; the vanity, and the fame, and the profits (the Professor is £500 ideal money out of pocket by this failure, besides £200 he would have got for the copyright, and the Professor is never much beforehand with the world; what he gets is all by the sweat of his brow and dint of brain, for the Professor, though a sure man, is also a slow); and now to muse upon thy altered physiognomy, thy pale and squalid appearance (a kind of *blue sickness* about the eyelids), and thy crest fallen, and thy proud demand of £200 from thy bookseller changed to an uncertainty of his taking it at all, or giving thee full £50. The Professor has won my heart by this *his* mournful catastrophe. You remember Marshall, who dined with him at my house; I met him in the lobby immediately after the damnation of the Professor's play, and he looked to me like an angel: his face was lengthened, and ALL OVER SWEAT; I never saw such a care-fraught visage; I could have hugged him, I loved him so intensely. 'From every pore of him a perfume fell.' I have seen that man in many situations, and from my soul I think that a more god-like honest soul exists not in this world. The Professor's poor nerves trembling with the recent shock, he hurried him away to my house to supper; and there we comforted him as well as we could. He came to consult me about a change of catastrophe; but alas! the piece was condemned long before that crisis. I at first humoured him with a specious proposition, but have since joined his true friends in advising him to give it up. He did it with a pang, and is to print it as *his*. L.

[The Professor was Lamb's name for Godwin.

'Quantum mutatus, etc.' A playful adaptation (which means: 'How changed from that professor who didst win such signal victories in the fields of philosophy!') from Virgil, *Æneid* II. 274-5:

Quantum mutatus ab illo

Hectore qui redit exuvias indutus Achilli.

'How changed from that Hector who came back to us decked in the spoils of Achilles!'

The *Porcupine* was Cobbett's paper.

After the play on the Saturday night Lamb and Godwin had supped together, to discuss the situation, and I fancy that the 'specious proposition' with which he humoured the author was a scheme of recasting it for a second attempt. If so, the following undated document was probably the result of Lamb's prompt attack on the script.]

91. TO WILLIAM GODWIN

[No date: *December 1800.*]

Queries. Whether the best conclusion would not be a solemn judicial pleading, appointed by the king, before himself in person, of Antonio as proxy for Roderigo, and Guzman for himself — the forms and ordering of it to be highly solemn and grand. For this purpose (allowing it,) the king must be reserved, and not have committed his royal dignity by descending to previous conference with Antonio, but must refer from the beginning to this settlement. He must sit in dignity as a high royal arbiter. Whether this would admit of spiritual interpositions, cardinals, &c.—appeals to the Pope, and haughty rejection of his interposition by Antonio—(this merely by the way).

The pleadings must be conducted by short speeches—replies, taunts, and bitter recriminations by Antonio, in his rough style. In the midst of the undecided cause, may not a messenger break up the proceedings by an account of Roderigo's death (no improbable or far-fetch'd event), and the whole conclude with an affecting and awful invocation of Antonio upon Roderigo's spirit, now no longer dependent upon earthly tribunals or a froward woman's will, &c., &c.

Almanza's daughter is now free, &c.

This might be made *very affecting*. Better nothing follow after;

if anything, she must step forward and resolve to take the veil. In this case the whole story of the former nunnery *must* be omitted. But, I think, better leave the final conclusion to the imagination of the spectator. Probably the violence of confining her in a convent is not necessary; Antonio's own castle would be sufficient.

To relieve the former part of the Play, could not some sensible images, some work for the Eye, be introduced? A gallery of Pictures, Almanza's ancestors, to which Antonio might affectingly point his sister, one by one, with anecdote, &c.

At all events, with the present want of action, the Play must not extend above four Acts, unless it is quite new modell'd. The proposed alterations might all be effected in a few weeks.

Solemn judicial pleadings always go off well, as in Henry the 8th, Merchant of Venice, and perhaps Othello.

[Lamb, said Kegan Paul, when writing this critical Minute, was so genuinely kind and even affectionate in his criticism that Godwin did not perceive his real disapproval.

Swinburne, writing in the *Athenæum* for 13th May 1876, made an interesting comment upon one of Lamb's suggestions in the foregoing document. It contains, he remarks, 'a singular anticipation of one of the most famous passages in the work of the greatest master of our own age, the scene of the portraits in *Hernani*: "To relieve the former part of the play, could not some sensible images, some work for the eye, be introduced? *A gallery of pictures, Alexander's ancestors, to which Antonio might affectingly point his sister, one by one, with anecdote, &c.*" I know of no coincidence more pleasantly and strangely notable than this between the gentle genius of the loveliest among English essayists and the tragic invention of the loftiest among French poets.'

As it happened, however, any plan for a second trial was withdrawn, as we see from the letter which Lamb wrote to Godwin on the next night.]

92. TO WILLIAM GODWIN

[14th December 1800.]

Late o' Sunday.

DEAR SIR,

I have performed my office in a slovenly way, but judge for me. I sat down at 6 o'clock, and never left reading (and I read out to Mary) your play till 10. In this sitting I noted down

lines as they occurred, exactly as you will read my rough paper. Do not be frightened at the bulk of my remarks, for they are almost all upon single lines, which, put together, do not amount to a hundred, and many of them merely verbal. I had but one object in view, abridgement for compression sake. I have used a dogmatical language (which is truly ludicrous when the trivial nature of my remarks is considered), and, remember, my office was to hunt out faults. You may fairly abridge one half of them, as a fair deduction for the infirmities of Error, and a single reading, which leaves only fifty objections, most of them merely against words, on no short play. Remember, you constituted me Executioner, and a hangman has been seldom seen to be ashamed of his profession before Master Sheriff. We'll talk of the Beauties (of which I am more than ever sure) when we meet,—
Yours truly, C. L.

I will barely add, as you are on the very point of printing, that in my opinion neither prologue nor epilogue should accompany the play. It can only serve to remind your readers of its fate. *Both* suppose an audience, and, that jest being gone, must convert into burlesque. Nor would I (but therein custom and decorum must be a law) print the actors' names. Some things must be kept out of sight.

I have done, and I have but a few square inches of paper to fill up. I am emboldened by a little jorum of punch (vastly good) to say that next to *one man*, I am the most hurt at our ill success. The breast of Hecuba, where she did suckle Hector, looked not to be more lovely than Marshall's forehead when it spit forth sweat, at Critic-swords contending. I remember two honest lines by Marvel, (whose poems by the way I am just going to possess)

Where every Mower's wholesome heat
Smells like an Alexander's sweat.

[Accompanying this letter were some textual criticisms which I have not seen beyond the solitary one which Kegan Paul cites in his *Life of Godwin*: 'Enviably' is a very bad word. I allude to 'Enviably right to bless us.' For instance, Burns, comparing the ills of manhood with the state of infancy, says, 'Oh! enviable early days'; here 'tis good, because the passion lay in comparison. Excuse my insulting your judgment with an illustration. I believe I only wanted to lug in the name of a favourite Bardie, or at most to confirm my own judgment.

Lamb, it will be remembered, had refused to let Coleridge use 'enviable' in *Lewti*. Burns's poem to which Lamb alludes is *Despondency, an Ode*, Stanza 5, 'Oh! enviable, early days.'

Godwin's play was published in 1801 without Lamb's epilogue.]

93 and 94. TO THOMAS MANNING

[19th December 1800.]

I send you all of Coleridge's letters to me, which I have preserved: some of them are upon the subject of my play. I also send you Kemble's two letters, and the prompter's courteous epistle, with a curious critique on 'Pride's Cure,' by a young physician from EDINBRO', who modestly suggests quite another kind of a plot. These are monuments of my disappointment which I like to preserve.

In Coleridge's letters you will find a good deal of amusement, to see genuine talent struggling against a pompous display of it. I also send you the Professor's letter to me (careful Professor! to conceal his *name* even from his correspondent), ere yet the Professor's pride was cured. Oh monstrous and almost satanical pride!

You will carefully keep all (except the Scotch Doctor's, *which burn*) in statu quo, till I come to claim mine own.

C. LAMB.

Written on the outside :

For Mister Manning, Teacher of the Mathematics and the black arts.

There is another letter in the inside cover of the book opposite the *blank* leaf that *was*.

Mind this goes for a letter. (Acknowledge it *directly*, if only in ten words.)

DEAR MANNING,

(I shall want to hear this comes safe.) I have scratched out a good deal, as you will see. Generally, what I have rejected was either *false* in *feeling*, or a violation of character—mostly of the first sort. I will here just instance in the concluding few lines of the 'Dying Lover's Story,' which completely contradicted his

character of *silent* and *unreproachful*. I hesitated a good deal what copy to send you, and at last resolved to send the worst, because you are familiar with it, and can make it out; and a stranger would find so much difficulty in doing it, that it would give him more pain than pleasure.

This is compounded precisely of the two persons' hands you requested it should be.—Yours sincerely, C. LAMB.

[These were the letters accompanying the copy of *Pride's Cure* (or *John Woodvil*) which Charles and Mary Lamb together made for Manning. He had asked for it, as appears from Letter 89.

All the letters mentioned by Lamb have vanished; unless by an unlikely chance the bundle contained Coleridge's letters on Mrs. Lamb's death and on the quarrel with Lamb and Lloyd.

Manning's reply, dated December 1800, gives a little information concerning the Edinburgh physician's letter—"that gentleman whose fertile brain can, at a moment's warning, furnish you with 10 Thousand models of a plot—"The greatest variety of Rapes, Murders, Deathsheads, &c., &c., sold here." Manning thinks that the Scotch doctor understands Lamb's tragedy better than Coleridge does. He adds: 'P.S.—My verdict upon the Poet's epitaph is "genuine."' This probably applies to a question asked by Lamb concerning Wordsworth's poem of that name.]

95. TO THOMAS MANNING

December 27th, 1800.

At length George Dyer's phrenesis has come to a crisis; he is raging and furiously mad. I waited upon the heathen, Thursday was a se'nnight; the first symptom which struck my eye and gave me incontrovertible proof of the fatal truth was a pair of nankeen pantaloons four times too big for him, which the said Heathen did pertinaciously affirm to be new.

They were absolutely ingrained with the accumulated dirt of ages; but he affirmed them to be clean. He was going to visit a lady that was nice about those things, and that's the reason he wore nankeen that day. And then he danced, and capered, and fidgeted, and pulled up his pantaloons, and hugged his intolerable flannel vestment closer about his poetic loins; anon he gave it loose to the zephyrs which plentifully insinuate their tiny bodies through every crevice, door, window or wainscot, expressly

formed for the exclusion of such impertinents. Then he caught at a proof sheet, and caught up a laundress's bill instead—made a dart at Blomfield's Poems, and threw them in agony aside. I could not bring him to one direct reply; he could not maintain his jumping mind in a right line for the tithe of a moment by Clifford's Inn clock. He must go to the printer's immediately—the most unlucky accident—he had struck off five hundred impressions of his Poems, which were ready for delivery to subscribers, and the Preface must all be expunged. There were eighty pages of Preface, and not till that morning had he discovered that in the very first page of said Preface he had set out with a principle of Criticism fundamentally wrong, which vitiated all his following reasoning. The Preface must be expunged, although it cost him £30—the lowest calculation, taking in paper and printing! In vain have his real friends remonstrated against this Midsummer madness. George is as obstinate as a Primitive Christian—and wards and parries off all our thrusts with one unanswerable fence;—'Sir, it's of great consequence that the *world* is not *misled*!'

As for the other Professor, he has actually begun to dive into Tavernier and Chardin's *Persian Travels* for a story, to form a new drama for the sweet tooth of this fastidious age. Hath not Bethlehem College a fair action for non-residence against such professors? Are poets so *few* in *this age*, that He must write poetry? Is *morals* a subject so exhausted, that he must quit that line? Is the metaphysic well (without a bottom) drained dry?

If I can guess at the wicked pride of the Professor's heart, I would take a shrewd wager that he disdains ever again to dip his pen in *Prose*. Adieu, ye splendid theories! Farewell, dreams of political justice! Lawsuits, where I was counsel for Archbishop Fenelon *versus* my own mother, in the famous fire cause!

Vanish from my mind, professors, one and all! I have metal more attractive on foot.

Man of many snipes,—I will sup with thee, Deo volente et diabolo nolente, on Monday night the 5th of January, in the new year, and crush a cup to the infant century.

A word or two of my progress. Embark at six o'clock in the morning, with a fresh gale, on a Cambridge one-decker; very cold till eight at night; land at St. Mary's light-house, muffins

and coffee upon table (or any other curious production of Turkey or both Indies), snipes exactly at nine, punch to commence at ten, with *argument*; difference of opinion is expected to take place about eleven; perfect unanimity, with some haziness and dimness, before twelve.—N.B. My single affection is not so singly wedded to snipes; but the curious and epicurean eye would also take a pleasure in beholding a delicate and well-chosen assortment of teals, ortolans, the unctuous and palate-soothing flesh of geese wild and tame, nightingales' brains, the sensorium of a young sucking-pig, or any other Christmas dish, which I leave to the judgment of you and the cook of Gonville.

C. LAMB.

[George Dyer's phrenesis was caused by his infatuation for Miss Benjay.

Lamb's copy of George Dyer's *Poems* is in the British Museum. It has the original withdrawn 1800 title-page and the cancelled preface bound up with it, and Lamb has written against the reference to the sacrifice, in the new 1801 preface: 'One copy of this cancelled preface, snatch'd out of the fire, is prefaced to this volume.' See Letter 114, page 279. It runs to sixty-five pages, whereas the new one is but a few words. Southey tells Grosvenor Bedford in one of his letters that Lamb gave Dyer the title of Cancellarius Magnus. Dyer reprinted in the 1802 edition of his *Poems* the greater part of the cancelled preface and all of the first page—so that it is difficult to say what the fallacy was. The original edition of his *Poems* was to be in three large volumes. In 1802 it had come down to two small ones.

Godwin's Persian drama was *Abbas, King of Persia*, but he could not get it acted. The reference to Fénelon is in Godwin's *Political Justice* (first edition, vol. i, page 84) where he argues on the comparative worth of the persons of Fénelon, a chambermaid, and Godwin's mother, supposing them to have been present at the famous fire at Cambrai and only one of them to be saved. (As a matter of fact Fénelon was not at the fire.)

'I have metal more attractive on foot.' See *Hamlet*, III. ii. 116.

'Many snipes.' Writing on 28th November Manning had said: 'The snipes shall present themselves to you, ready roasted—you shall take the digestible parts, and I'll take the long bills.'

That Lamb at last visited Cambridge we know from Letter 98 to Robert Lloyd.

In a letter on 26th January 1801 to Manning from Charles Lamb we learn that Lamb had recently written to him the same note three times, saying merely: 'I am moved to despair because I have heard nothing from you.'

We now come to Lamb's first letter to Wordsworth.]

96. TO WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

[P.M. 30th January 1801.]

Thanks for your Letter and Present. I had already borrowed your second volume. What most please me are, the Song of Lucy. . . . *Simon's sickly daughter* in the Sexton made me cry. Next to these are the description of the continuous Echoes in the story of Joanna's laugh, where the mountains and all the scenery absolutely seem alive—and that fine Shakesperian character of the Happy Man, in the Brothers,

———that creeps about the fields,
Following his fancies by the hour, to bring
Tears down his cheek, or solitary smiles
Into his face, *until the Setting Sun*
Write Fool upon his forehead.

I will mention one more: the delicate and curious feeling in the wish for the Cumberland Beggar, that he may have about him the melody of Birds, altho' he hear them not. Here the mind knowingly passes a fiction upon herself, first substituting her own feelings for the Beggar's, and, in the same breath detecting the fallacy, will not part with the wish.—The Poet's Epitaph is disfigured, to my taste by the vulgar satire upon parsons and lawyers in the beginning, and the coarse epithet of pin point in the 6th stanza. All the rest is eminently good, and your own. I will just add that it appears to me a fault in the Beggar, that the instructions conveyed in it are too direct and like a lecture: they don't slide into the mind of the reader, while he is imagining no such matter. An intelligent reader finds a sort of insult in being told, I will teach you how to think upon this subject. This fault, if I am right, is in a ten-thousandth worse degree to be found in Sterne and many many novelists & modern poets, who continually put a sign post up to shew where you are to feel. They set out with assuming their readers to be stupid. Very different from Robinson Crusoe, the Vicar of Wakefield, Roderick Random, and other beautiful bare narratives. There is implied an unwritten compact between Author and reader; I will tell you a story, and I suppose you will understand it. Modern novels 'St. Leons' and the like are full of such flowers

as these 'Let not my reader suppose,' 'Imagine, *if you can*'—modest!—&c.—I will here have done with praise and blame. I have written so much, only that you may not think I have passed over your book without observation.—I am sorry that Coleridge has christened his Ancient Marinere 'a poet's Reverie'—it is as bad as Bottom the Weaver's declaration that he is not a Lion but only the scenical representation of a Lion. What new idea is gained by this Title, but one subversive of all credit, which the tale should force upon us, of its truth? For me, I was never so affected with any human Tale. After first reading it, I was totally possessed with it for many days—I dislike all the miraculous part of it, but the feelings of the man under the operation of such scenery dragged me along like Tom Piper's magic whistle. I totally differ from your idea that the Marinere should have had a character and profession. This is a Beauty in Gulliver's Travels, where the mind is kept in a placid state of little wonderments; but the Ancient Marinere undergoes such Trials, as overwhelm and bury all individuality or memory of what he was, like the state of a man in a Bad dream, one terrible peculiarity of which is: that all consciousness of personality is gone. Your other observation is I think as well a little unfounded: the Marinere from being conversant in supernatural events *has* acquired a supernatural and strange cast of *phrase*, eye, appearance, &c. which frighten the wedding guest. You will excuse my remarks, because I am hurt and vexed that you should think it necessary, with a prose apology, to open the eyes of dead men that cannot see. To sum up a general opinion of the second vol.—I do not feel any one poem in it so forcibly as the Ancient Marinere, the Mad Mother, and the Lines at Tintern Abbey in the first.—I could, too, have wished the Critical preface had appeared in a separate treatise. All its dogmas are true and just, and most of them new, *as* criticism. But they associate a *diminishing* idea with the Poems which follow, as having been written for *Experiment* on the public taste, more than having sprung (as they must have done) from living and daily circumstances.—I am prolix, because I am gratified in the opportunity of writing to you, and I don't well know when to leave off. I ought before this to have reply'd to your very kind invitation into Cumberland. With you and your Sister I could gang any where. But I am afraid whether I

shall ever be able to afford so desperate a Journey. Separate from the pleasure of your company, I don't much care if I never see a mountain in my life. I have passed all my days in London, until I have formed as many and intense local attachments, as any of you mountaineers can have done with dead nature. The Lighted shops of the Strand and Fleet Street, the innumerable trades, tradesmen and customers, coaches, waggons, playhouses, all the bustle and wickedness round about Covent Garden, the very women of the Town, the Watchmen, drunken scenes, rattles, —life awake, if you awake, at all hours of the night, the impossibility of being dull in Fleet Street, the crowds, the very dirt & mud, the Sun shining upon houses and pavements, the print shops, the old book stalls, parsons cheap'ning books, coffee houses, steams of soups from kitchens, the pantomimes, London itself a pantomime and a masquerade,—all these things work themselves into my mind and feed me, without a power of satiating me. The wonder of these sights impells me into night-walks about her crowded streets, and I often shed tears in the motley Strand from fulness of joy at so much Life.—All these emotions must be strange to you. So are your rural emotions to me. But consider, what must I have been doing all my life, not to have lent great portions of my heart with usury to such scenes?—

My attachments are all local, purely local. I have no passion (or have had none since I was in love, and then it was the spurious engendering of poetry & books) to groves and vallies. The rooms where I was born, the furniture which has been before my eyes all my life, a book case which has followed me about (like a faithful dog, only exceeding him in knowledge) wherever I have moved—old chairs, old tables, streets, squares, where I have sunned myself, my old school,—these are my mistresses. Have I not enough, without your mountains? I do not envy you. I should pity you, did I not know, that the Mind will make friends of any thing. Your sun & moon and skys and hills & lakes affect me no more, or scarcely come to me in more venerable characters, than as a gilded room with tapestry and tapers, where I might live with handsome visible objects. I consider the clouds above me but as a roof, beautifully painted but unable to satisfy the mind, and at last, like the pictures of the apartment of

a connoisseur, unable to afford him any longer a pleasure. So fading upon me, from disuse, have been the Beauties of Nature, as they have been confinedly called; so ever fresh & green and warm are all the inventions of men and assemblies of men in this great city. I should certainly have laughed with dear Joanna.

Give my kindest love, *and my sister's*, to D. & yourself and a kiss from me to little Barbara Lewthwaite.

C. LAMB.

Thank you for Liking my Play!!

[This is the first—and perhaps the finest—letter from Lamb to Wordsworth that has been preserved, although there must, I think, have been a predecessor accompanying *John Woodvil*. Wordsworth, then living with his sister Dorothy at Dove Cottage, Grasmere, was nearly thirty-one years of age; Lamb was nearly twenty-six. The work criticized is the second edition of the *Lyrical Ballads*. The second and sixth stanzas of the *Poet's Epitaph* ran thus:

A Lawyer art thou?—draw not nigh;
Go, carry to some other place
The hardness of thy coward eye,
The falsehood of thy sallow face.

Wrapp'd closely in thy sensual fleece
O turn aside, and take, I pray,
That he below may rest in peace,
Thy pin-point of a soul away!

Later 'the coarse epithet of pin-point' was removed and 'ever-dwindling soul' substituted.

St. Leon was a novel by Godwin.

Of *The Ancient Mariner*, a *Poet's Reverie*, Wordsworth had said in a note to the first volume of *Lyrical Ballads*:

The Poem of my Friend has indeed great defects; first, that the principal person has no distinct character, either in his profession of Mariner, or as a human being who having been long under the controul of supernatural impressions might be supposed himself to partake of something supernatural; secondly, that he does not act, but is continually acted upon; thirdly, that the events having no necessary connection do not produce each other; and lastly, that the imagery is somewhat too laboriously accumulated.

'The Mad Mother.' The poem beginning, 'Her eyes are wild, her head is bare.'

'I could, too, have wished.' The passage from these words to 'don't well know when to leave off' used to be omitted in the editions of Lamb's Letters. When Wordsworth sent the correspondence to Moxon, for Talfourd's use, in 1835, he wrote:

There are, however, in them some parts which had better be kept back.

. . . I have also thought it proper to suppress every word of criticism [Wordsworth meant adverse criticism] upon my own poems. . . . Those relating to my works are withheld, partly because I shrink from the thought of assisting in any way to spread my own praises, and still more I being convinced that the opinions or judgments of friends given in this way are of little value.

'Joanna.' Joanna of the laugh. See *Poems on the Naming of Places*, II 'To Joanna.' 'Barbara Lewthwaite.' See Wordsworth's *Pet Lamb* with his prefatory note.

'Thank you for Liking my Play!!' We must suppose this postscript to contain a touch of sarcasm. Lamb had sent *John Woodvil* to Grasmere and Keswick. Wordsworth apparently had been but politely interested in it. Coleridge had written to Godwin: 'Talking of tragedies, at every perusal my love and admiration of his [Lamb's] play rises a peg.'

The eulogy of London, one of Lamb's first efforts in this accumulative Elian manner, was, as we shall see, to be worked up for print.]

97. TO THOMAS MANNING

[Dated at end: *Tuesday, 3rd February (1801).*]

Manning, what is the matter? My mind misgives me desperately that you take something amiss. I commissioned to give you a letter on Saturday, but it has produced no reply. Relieve me from a troublesome uncertainty by *but one line*.

Yours ever, C. LAMB.

Tuesday, 3 Feb. (1801).

[The name of Lamb's agent is missing.]

98. TO ROBERT LLOYD

February 7, 1801.

DEAR ROBERT,

I shall expect you to bring me a brimful account of the pleasure which Walton has given you, when you come to town. It must square with your mind. The delightful innocence and healthfulness of the Angler's mind will have blown upon yours like a Zephyr. Don't you already feel your spirit *filled* with the scenes?—the banks of rivers—the cowslip beds—the pastoral scenes—the neat alehouses—and hostesses and milkmaids, as far exceeding

Virgil and Pope, as the 'Holy Living' is beyond Thomas à Kempis. Are not the eating and drinking joys painted to the Life? Do they not inspire you with an immortal hunger? Are not you ambitious of being made an Angler? What edition have you got? is it Hawkins's, with plates of Piscator, &c.? That sells very dear. I have only been able to purchase the last edition without the old Plates which pleased my childhood; the plates being worn out, and the old Edition difficult and expensive to procure. The 'Complete Angler' is the only Treatise written in Dialogues that is worth a halfpenny. Many elegant dialogues have been written (such as Bishop Berkeley's 'Minute Philosopher'), but in all of them the Interlocutors are merely abstract arguments personify'd; not living dramatic characters, as in Walton, where *every thing is alive*; the fishes are absolutely *charactered*; and birds and animals are as interesting as men and women.

I need not be at much pains to get the 'Holy Livings.' We can procure them in ten minutes' search at any stall or shop in London. By your engaging one for Priscilla, it should seem *she* will be in Town—is that the case? I thought she was fix'd at the Lakes.

I perfectly understand the nature of your solitariness at Birm., and wish I could divide myself, 'like a bribed haunch' between London and it. But courage! you will soon be emancipated, and (it may be) have a frequent power of visiting this great place. Let them talk of lakes and mountains and romantic dales—all that fantastic stuff; give me a ramble by night, in the winter nights in London—the Lamps lit—the pavements of the motley Strand crowded with to and fro passengers—the shops all brilliant, and stuffed with obliging customers and obliged tradesmen—give me the old bookstalls of London—a walk in the bright Piazzas of Covent Garden. I defy a man to be dull in such places—perfect Mahometan paradises upon earth! I have lent out my heart with usury to such scenes from my childhood up, and have cried with fulness of joy at the multitudinous scenes of Life in the crowded streets of ever dear London. I wish you could fix here. I don't know if you quite comprehend my low Urban Taste; but depend upon it that a man of any feeling will have given his heart and his love in childhood and in boyhood to

any scenes where he has been bred, as well to dirty streets (and smoky walls as they are called) as to green lanes, 'where live nibbling sheep,' and to the everlasting hills and the Lakes and ocean. A mob of men is better than a flock of sheep, and a crowd of happy faces justling into the playhouse at the hour of six is a more beautiful spectacle to man than the shepherd driving his 'silly' sheep to fold. Come to London and learn to sympathise with my unrural notions.

Wordsworth has published a second vol.—'Lyrical Ballads.' Most of them very good, but not so good as first vol. What more can I tell you? I believe I told you I have been to see Manning. He is a dainty chiel.—A man of great Power—an enchanter almost.—Far beyond Coleridge or any man in power of impressing—when he gets you alone, he can act the wonders of Egypt. Only he is lazy, and does not always put forth all his strength; if he did, I know no man of genius at all comparable to him.

Yours as ever,

C. L.

[In a later letter Lamb fixed on a definite edition of Walton for his young friend.

Priscilla Lloyd was soon to become Mrs. Christopher Wordsworth.

'Bribed haunch.' Lamb was remembering, not quite distinctly, Falstaff's remark to Mistress Ford (*The Merry Wives of Windsor*, Act v, Scene v): 'Divide me like a bribe buck, each a haunch.' Bribe, or bribed, means poached.

Concerning Lamb's enthusiasm for Manning, it is interesting to relate here that, twenty-three years later, on 10th June 1824, Crabb Robinson notes that on a walk with Lamb he was still lyrical about the genius of Manning: 'More extraordinary than Wordsworth or Coleridge.']

99. TO THOMAS MANNING

Feb. 15, 1801.

I had need be cautious henceforward what opinion I give of the 'Lyrical Ballads.' All the North of England are in a turmoil. Cumberland and Westmoreland have already declared a state of war. I lately received from Wordsworth a copy of the second volume, accompanied by an acknowledgement of having received from me many months since a copy of a certain Tragedy, with

excuses for not having made any acknowledgement sooner, it being owing to an 'almost insurmountable aversion from Letter-writing.' This letter I answered in due form and time, and enumerated several of the passages which had most affected me, adding, unfortunately, that no single piece had moved me so forcibly as the *Ancient Mariner*, *The Mad Mother*, or the *Lines at Tintern Abbey*. The Post did not sleep a moment. I received almost instantaneously a long letter of four sweating pages from my Reluctant Letter-Writer, the purport of which was, that he was sorry his 2d vol. had not given me more pleasure (Devil a hint did I give that it had *not pleased me*), and 'was compelled to wish that my range of sensibility was more extended, being obliged to believe that I should receive large influxes of happiness and happy Thoughts' (I suppose from the L. B.)—With a deal of stuff about a certain Union of Tenderness and Imagination, which in the sense he used Imagination was not the characteristic of Shakspeare, but which Milton possessed in a degree far exceeding other Poets: which Union, as the highest species of Poetry, and chiefly deserving that name, 'He was most proud to aspire to'; then illustrating the said Union by two quotations from his own 2d vol. (which I had been so unfortunate as to miss). 1st Specimen—a father addresses his son:

When thou
First camest into the World, as it befalls
To new-born Infants, thou didst sleep away
Two days: and *Blessings from Thy father's Tongue*
Then fell upon thee.

The lines were thus undermarked, and then followed 'This Passage, as combining in an extraordinary degree that Union of Imagination and Tenderness which I am speaking of, I consider as one of the Best I ever wrote!'

2d Specimen.—A youth, after years of absence, revisits his native place, and thinks (as most people do) that there has been strange alteration in his absence:—

And that the rocks
And everlasting Hills themselves were changed.

You see both these are good Poetry: but after one has been reading Shakspeare twenty of the best years of one's life, to have a fellow

start up, and prate about some unknown quality, which Shakespeare possessed in a degree inferior to Milton and *somebody else*!! This was not to be *all* my castigation. Coleridge, who had not written to me some months before, starts up from his bed of sickness to reprove me for my hardy presumption: four long pages, equally sweaty and more tedious, came from him; assuring me that, when the works of a man of true genius such as W. undoubtedly was, do not please me at first sight, I should suspect the fault to lie 'in me and not in them,' etc. etc. etc. etc. What am I to do with such people? I certainly shall write them a very merry Letter. Writing to *you*, I may say that the 2d vol. has no such pieces as the three I enumerated. It is full of original thinking and an observing mind, but it does not often make you laugh or cry.—It too artfully aims at simplicity of expression. And you sometimes doubt if Simplicity be not a cover for Poverty. The best Piece in it I will send you, being *short*. I have grievously offended my friends in the North by declaring my undue preference; but I need not fear you:—

She dwelt among the untrodden ways
Beside the Springs of Dove,
A maid whom there were few [none] to praise
And very few to love.

A violet, by a mossy stone,
Half hidden from the eye.
Fair as a star when only one
Is shining in the sky.

She lived unknown; and few could know,
When Lucy ceased to be.
But she is in the [her] grave, and oh!
The difference to me.

This is choice and genuine, and so are many, many more. But one does not like to have 'em rammed down one's throat. 'Pray, take it—it's very good—let me help you—eat faster.'

At length George Dyer's first volume is come to a birth. One volume of three—subscribers being allowed by the prospectus to pay for all at once (tho' it's very doubtful if the rest ever come to anything, this having been already some years getting out). I paid two guineas for you and myself, which entitle us to the

whole. I will send you your copy, if you are in a *great hurry*. Meantime you owe me a guinea.

George skipped about like a scorched pea at the receipt of so much cash. To give you a specimen of the beautiful absurdity of the notes, which defy imitation, take one: 'Discrimination is not the *aim* of the present volume. It will be more strictly attended to in the next.' One of the sonnets purports to have been written in Bedlam! This for a man to own!

The rest are addressed to Science, Genius, Melancholy—&c. &c.—two, to the River Cam—an Ode to the Nightingale. Another to Howard, beginning: 'Spirit of meek Philanthropy!' One is entitled *The Madman*—'being collected by the author from several Madhouses.' It begins: 'Yes, yes,—'tis He!' A long poetical satire is addressed to 'John Disney, D.D.—his wife and daughter!!!'

Now to my own affairs. I have not taken that thing to Colman, but I have proceeded one step in the business. I have enquired his address, and am promised it in a few days: Meantime three acts and a half are finished galloping, of a Play on a Persian story which I must father in April. But far, very far, from *Antonio* in composition. O Jephtha, Judge of Israel, what a fool I was!

C. LAMB.

[It cannot be too much regretted that Lamb's 'very merry Letter' in answer to Wordsworth and Coleridge's remonstrances has not been preserved.

'That thing,' *John Woodvil*, I suppose. George Colman, the younger, was the manager of the Haymarket Theatre.

O Jephthah, judge of Israel, what a treasure hadst thou!—

Hamlet, II. ii. 432.

Manning's reply covered another set of three of Lamb's letters, or rather notes, which have not, however, been preserved. I quote a little:

How could you think I should refuse to write to you? Had you no easier way of solving the Phenomenon? You Dramatic Writers are very expert in *framing* Incidents to produce strange effects—'tis very odd then when strange things *do* really take place, that you can't *fit them* with proper incidents for their causes. Suppose you had invented that I went out of Cambridge—in a hurry and left no word where my letters should be sent after me? Or, suppose—anything else.—At any rate never suppose me *mortally* offended, till I give you *positive* indications of it.

I have not time to give you my opinion of the 2d. Vol. of *Ly. Ballads*,

except that I think tis utterly absurd from one end to the other—*You* tell me tis good poetry—if you mean that there is nothing puerile, nothing Bombast or conceited, or anything else that is so often found to disfigure *poetry*, I agree, but will you read it over and over again? Answer me that, Master Lamb—]

100. TO THOMAS MANNING

[Late February 1801.]

You masters of logic ought to know (logic is nothing more than a knowledge of *words*, as the Greek etymon implies), that all words are no more to be taken in a literal sense at all times than a promise given to a tailor. When I expressed an apprehension that you were mortally offended, I meant no more than by the application of a certain formula of efficacious sounds, which had *done* in similar cases before, to rouse a sense of decency in you, and a remembrance of what was due to me! You masters of logic should advert to this phenomenon in human speech, before you arraign the usage of us dramatic geniuses. Imagination is a good blood mare, and goes well; but the misfortune is, she has too many paths before her. 'Tis true I might have imaged to myself, that you had trundled your frail carcass to Norfolk. I might also, and did imagine, that you had not, but that you were lazy, or inventing new properties in a triangle, and for that purpose moulding and squeezing Landlord Crisp's three-cornered beaver into fantastic experimental forms; or that Archimedes was meditating to repulse the French, in case of a Cambridge invasion, by a geometric hurling of folios on their red caps; or, peradventure, that you were in extremities, in great wants, and just set out for Trinity-bogs when my letters came. In short, my genius (which is a short word now-a-days for what-a-great-man-am-I) was absolutely stifled and overlaid with its own riches. Truth is one and poor, like the cruse of Elijah's widow. Imagination is the bold face that multiplies its oil: and thou, the old cracked pipkin, that could not believe it could be put to such purposes. Dull pipkin, to have Elijah for thy cook! Imbecile recipient of so fat a miracle! I send you George Dyer's Poems, the richest production of the lyric muse *this century* can justly boast: for Wordsworth's L. B. were published, or at least written, before Christmas.

Please to advert to pages 291 to 296 for the most astonishing account of where Shakspeare's muse has been all this while. I thought she had been dead, and buried in Stratford Church, with the young man *that kept her company*,—

But it seems, like the Devil,
Buried in Cole Harbour.
Some say she's risen again,
'Gone prentice to a Barber.

N.B.—I don't charge anything for the additional manuscript notes, which are the joint productions of myself and a learned translator of Schiller, John Stoddart, Esq.

N.B. the 2nd.—I should not have blotted your book, but I had sent my own out to be bound, as I was in duty bound. A liberal criticism upon the several pieces, lyrical, heroical, amatory, and satirical, would be acceptable.

So, you don't think there's a Word's—worth of good poetry in the great L. B.! I daren't put the dreaded syllables at their just length, for my back tingles from the northern castigation. I send you the three letters, which I beg you to return along with those former letters, which I hope you are not going to print by your detention. But don't be in a hurry to send them. When you come to town will do. Apropos of coming to town, last Sunday was a fortnight, as I was coming to town from the Professor's, inspired with new rum, I tumbled down, and broke my nose. I drink nothing stronger than malt liquors.

I am going to change my lodgings, having received a hint that it would be agreeable, at our Lady's next feast. I have partly fixed upon most delectable rooms, which look out (when you stand a tiptoe) over the Thames and Surrey Hills, at the upper end of King's Bench walks in the Temple. There I shall have all the privacy of a house without the encumbrance, and shall be able to lock my friends out as often as I desire to hold free converse with my immortal mind; for my present lodgings resemble a minister's levee, I have so increased my acquaintance (as they call 'em), since I have resided in town. Like the country mouse, that had tasted a little of urban manners, I long to be nibbling my own cheese by my dear self without mouse-traps and time-traps. By my new plan, I shall be as airy, up four pair of stairs, as in the country; and in a garden, in the midst of [that] enchant-

ing, more than Mahometan paradise, London, whose dirtiest drab-frequented alley, and her lowest bowing tradesman, I would not exchange for Skiddaw, Helvellyn, James, Walter, and the parson into the bargain. O! her lamps of a night! her rich goldsmiths, print-shops, toyshops, mercers, hardwaremen, pastry-cooks! St. Paul's Churchyard! the Strand! Exeter Change! Charing Cross, with the man *upon* a black horse! These are thy gods, O London! Ain't you mightily moped on the banks of the Cam! Had not you better come and set up here? You can't think what a difference. All the streets and pavements are pure gold, I warrant you. At least I know an alchemy that turns her mud into that metal,—a mind that loves to be at home in crowds.

'Tis half-past twelve o'clock, and all sober people ought to be a-bed. Between you and me, the *Lyrical Ballads* are but drowsy performances.

C. LAMB (as you may guess).

['You masters of logic' is Lamb's counter to Manning's 'You dramatic writers,' Lamb keeping up the idea that all graduates of the universities were great logicians.

The passage in George Dyer's *Poems* between pages 291 and 296 is long, but it is so quaint and so illustrative of its author's mind that I give it in full, footnotes and all.

Yet, Muse of Shakspeare,¹ whither wouldst thou fly,
With hurried step, and dove-like trembling eye?
Thou, as from heav'n, that couldst each grace dispense,
Fancy's rich stream, and all the stores of sense;
Give to each virtue face and form divine,
Make dulness feel, and vulgar souls refine,
There he our fancy of itself bereaving,
Did make us marble with too much conceiving.

MILTON'S SONNET TO SHAKSPEARE.

Wake all the passions into restless life,
Now calm to softness, and now rouze to strife?

¹ It is not meant to say, that even Shakspeare followed invariably a correct and chastized taste, or that he never purchased public applause by offering incense at the shrine of public taste. Voltaire, in his *Essays on Dramatic Poetry*, has carried the matter too far; but in many respects his reflections are unquestionably just. In delineating human characters and passions, and in the display of the sublimer excellencies of poetry, Shakspeare was unrivalled.

Sick of misjudging, that no sense can hit,
 Scar'd by the jargon of unmeaning wit,
 The senseless splendour of the tawdry stage,¹
 The loud long plaudits of a trifling age,
 Where dost thou wander? Exil'd in disgrace,
 Find'st thou in foreign realms some happier place?²
 Or dost thou still though banish'd from the town,
 In Britain love to linger, though unknown?
 Light Hymen's torch through ev'ry blooming grove,³
 And tinge each flow'ret with the blush of love?
 Sing winter, summer-sweets, the vernal air,
 Or the soft Sofa, to delight the fair?⁴
 Laugh, e'en at kings, and mock each prudish rule,

¹ Pomp and splendour a poor substitute for genius.

² The dramatic muse seems of late years to have taken her residence in Germany. Schiller, Kotzebue, and Goethe, possess great merit both for passion and sentiment, and the English nation have done them justice. One or two principles which the French and English critics had too implicitly followed from Aristotle, are indeed not adopted, but have been, I hope, successfully, counteracted by these writers; yet are these dramatists characterized by a wildness bordering on extravagance, attendant on a state of half-civilization. Schiller and Kotzebue, amid some faults, possess great excellencies.

With respect to England, it has long been noticed by very intelligent observers, that the dramatic taste of the present age is vitiated. Pope, who directed very powerful satire against the stage in his time, makes Dulness say in general terms,

Contending theatres our empire raise,
 Alike their censure, and alike their praise.

It would be the highest arrogance in me to make such an assertion, with my slender knowledge in these matters; ready too, as I am, to admire some excellent pieces that have fallen in my way; and to affirm, that there is by no means a deficiency of poetic talent in England.

Aristotle observes, that all the parts of the Epic poet are to be found in tragedy, and, consequently, that this species of writing is, of all others, most interesting to men of talents. (*Περὶ ποιητικῆς*.) And Baron Kotzebue thinks the theatre the best school of instruction, both in morals and taste, even for children; and that better effects are produced by a play, than by a sermon. See his life, written by himself, just translated by Anne Plumptre.

How much then is it to be wished, that so admirable a mean of amusement and instruction might be advanced to its true point of excellence! But the principles laid down by Bishop HURD, though calculated to advance the love of splendour, will not, I suspect, advance the TRUE PROVINCE OF THE DRAMA.

³ *Loves of the Plants*, by Dr. Darwin.

⁴ *The Task*, by Cowper; written at the request of a lady. The introductory poem is entitled, *The Sofa*.

The merry motley priest of ridicule? ¹
 With modest pencil paint the vernal scene,
 The rustic lovers, and the village green?
 Bid Mem'ry, magic child, resume his toy,
 And Hope's fond vot'ry seize the distant joy? ²

Or dost thou soar, in youthful ardour strong,
 And bid some female hero live in song? ³
 Teach fancy how through nature's walks to stray,
 And wake, to simpler theme, the lyric lay? ⁴
 Or steal from beauty's lip th' ambrosial kiss,
 Paint the domestic grief, or social bliss? ⁵
 With patient step now tread o'er rock and hill,
 Gaze on rough ocean, track the babbling rill, ⁶
 Then rapt in thought, with strong poetic eye,
 Read the great movement of the mighty sky?

Or wilt thou spread the light of Leo's age,
 And smooth, as woman's guide, Tansillo's page? ⁷
 Till pleas'd, you make in fair translated song,
 Odin descend, and rouse the fairy throng? ⁸

Stoddart we have already met. He had translated, with Georg Heinrich Noehden, Schiller's *Fiesco*, 1796, and *Don Carlos*, 1798. The copy of Dyer's *Poems* annotated by Lamb and Stoddart I have not seen.

Two of the three letters containing the northern castigation are unhappily lost. 'I am going to change my lodgings.' The Lambs were still at 27 Southampton Buildings; they moved to 16 Mitre Court Buildings just before Lady Day 1801.

'James, Walter, and the parson.' In Wordsworth's poem *The Brothers*.

Exeter Change, which stood where Burleigh Street now is, was a great building, with bookstalls and miscellaneous stalls on the ground floor, and a menagerie above. It was demolished in 1829.]

¹ Dr. Walcot [Wolcot: Peter Pindar], whose poetry is of a farcical and humorous character.

² *The Pleasures of Memory*, by Rogers; and *The Pleasures of Hope*, by Campbell.

³ *Joan of Arc*, by Southey;—a volume of poems with an introductory sonnet to Mary Wolstonecraft, and a poem, on the praise of woman, breathes the same spirit.

⁴ Alludes to the character of a volume of poems, entitled *Lyrical Ballads*. Under this head also should be mentioned Smythe's *English Lyrics*.

⁵ Characteristic of a volume of poems, the joint production of Coleridge, Lloyd, and Lamb.

⁶ Descriptive poems, such as *Leusden Hill*, by Thomas Crowe; and the *Malvern Hills*, by Joseph Cottle.

⁷ Roscoe's *Reign of Leo de Medici* is interspersed with poetry. Roscoe has also translated *The Nurse*, a poem, from the Italian of Luigi Tansillo.

⁸ *Icelandic Poetry, or the Edda of Samund*, translated by Amos Cottle; and the *Oberon of Wieland*, by Sotheby.

101. TO THOMAS MANNING

April, 1801.

I was not aware that you owed me anything beside that guinea; but I dare say you are right. I live at No. 16 Mitre-court Buildings, a pistol-shot off Baron Maseres'. You must introduce me to the Baron. I think we should suit one another mainly. He lives on the ground floor for convenience of the gout; I prefer the attic story for the air! He keeps three footmen and two maids; I have neither maid nor laundress, not caring to be troubled with them! His forte, I understand, is the higher mathematics; my turn, I confess, is more to poetry and the belles lettres. The very antithesis of our characters would make up a harmony. You must bring the baron and me together.—N.B. when you come to see me, mount up to the top of the stairs—I hope you are not asthmatical—and come in flannel, for it's pure airy up there. And bring your glass, and I will shew you the Surrey Hills. My bed faces the river so as by perking up upon my haunches, and supporting my carcase with my elbows, without much wrying my neck, I can see the white sails glide by the bottom of the King's Bench walks as I lie in my bed. An excellent tiptoe prospect in the best room: casement windows with small panes, to look more like a cottage. Mind, I have got no bed for you, that's flat; sold it to pay expenses of moving. The very bed on which Manning lay—the friendly, the mathematical Manning! How forcibly does it remind me of the interesting Otway! 'The very bed which on thy marriage night gave thee into the arms of Belvidera, by the coarse hands of ruffians—' (upholsterers' men,) &c. My tears will not give me leave to go on. But a bed I will get you, Manning, on condition you will be my day-guest.

I have been ill more than [a] month, with a bad cold, which comes upon me (like a murderer's conscience) about midnight, and vexes me for many hours. I have successively been drugged with Spanish licorice, opium, ipecacuanha, paregoric, and tincture of foxglove (tinctura purpuræ digitalis of the ancients). I am afraid I must leave off drinking.

[Francis Maseres (1731–1824), whom Lamb mentions again in his *Elia*

essay on 'The Old Benchers,' was the mathematician (hence his interest to Manning) and reformer. His rooms were at 5 King's Bench Walk. He became Cursitor Baron of the Exchequer in 1773. To the end he wore a three-cornered hat, a wig and ruffles. Priestley praised the Baron's mathematical labours, in which he had the support of William Frend.

Belvidera in Thomas Otway's *Venice Preserved*, one of Mrs. Siddons's famous parts.]

102. TO THOMAS MANNING

[No date: ? April 1801.]

DEAR MANNING,

I sent to Brown's immediately. Mr. Brown (or Pijou, as he is called by the moderns) denied the having received a letter from you. The one for you he remembered receiving, and remitting to Leadenhall Street; whither I immediately posted (it being the middle of dinner), my teeth unpicked. There I learned that if you want a letter set right, you must apply at the first door on the left hand before one o'clock. I returned and picked my teeth. And this morning I made my application in form, and have seen the vagabond letter, which most likely accompanies this. If it does not, I will get Rickman to name it to the Speaker, who will not fail to lay the matter before Parliament the next sessions, when you may be sure to have all abuses in the Post Department rectified.

N.B. There seems to be some informality epidemical. You direct yours to me in Mitre Court; my true address is Mitre Court Buildings. By the pleasantries of Fortune, who likes a joke or a *double entendre* as well as the best of her children, there happens to be another Mr. Lamb (that there should be two! :) in Mitre Court. His duns and girls frequently stumble up to me, and I am obliged to satisfy both in the best way I am able.

Farewell, and think upon it.

C. L.

[Manning's letter about Brown having vanished, I cannot explain.]

103. TO ROBERT LLOYD

April 6, 1801.

Fletcher's *Purple Island* is a tedious Allegory of the Parts of the Human body. I would not advise you to lay out six pence

upon it. It is not the work of Fletcher, the Coadjutor of Beaumont, but one Phineas, a kinsman of his.

If by the work of Bishop Taylor, whose Title you have not given correctly, you mean his *Contemplations on the State of Man in this Life and that which is to come*, I dare hope you will join with me in believing it to be spurious. The suspicious circumstance of its being a posthumous work, with the total dissimilarity in style to the genuine works, I think evince that it never was the work of Doctor Jeremy Taylor, Late Lord Bishop of Down and Connor in Ireland, and Administrator of the See of Dromore; such are the titles which his sounding title-pages give him, and I love the man, and I love his paraphernalia, and I like to name him with all his attributions and additions. If you are yet but lightly acquainted with his real manner, take up and read the whole first chapter of the *Holy Dying*; in particular turn to the first paragraph of the second section of that chapter for a simile of a rose, or more truly many similes within simile; for such were the riches of his fancy, that when a beauteous image offered, before he could stay to expand it into all its capacities, throngs of new coming images came up, and jostled out the first, or blended in disorder with it, which imitates the order of every rapid mind. But read all the first chapter by my advice; and I know I need not advise you, when you have read it, to read the second.

Or for another specimen (where so many beauties crowd, the judgment has yet vanity enough to think it can discern a handsomest, till a second judgment and a third *ad infinitum* start up to disallow their elder brother's pretensions) turn to the story of the Ephesian Matron in the second section of the 5th chapter of the same *Holy Dying* (I still refer to the *Dying* part, because it contains better matter than the *Holy Living*, which deals more in rules than illustrations—I mean in comparison with the other only, else it has more and more beautiful illustrations—than any prose book besides)—read it yourself and show it to Plumstead (with my LOVE, and bid him write to me), and ask him if WILLY himself has ever told a story with more circumstances of FANCY and HUMOUR.

The paragraph begins, 'But that which is to be faulted,' and the story not long after follows. Make these references while P. is with you, that you may stir him up to the Love of Jeremy

Taylor, and make a convertite of him. Coleridge was the man who first solemnly exhorted me to 'study' the works of Dr. Jeremy Taylor, and I have had reason to bless the hour in which he did it. Read as many of his works as you can get. I will assist you in getting them when we go a stall hunting together in London, and it's odds if we don't get a good Beaumont and Fletcher cheap.

Bp. Taylor has more and more beautiful imagery, and (what is more to a Lover of Willy) more knowledge and description of human life and manners than any prose book in the language: he has more delicacy and sweetness than any mortal, the 'gentle' Shakspeare hardly excepted,—his similes and allusions are taken, as the bees take honey, from all the youngest, greenest, exquisitest parts of nature, from plants, and flowers, and fruit, young boys and virgins, from little children perpetually, from sucking infants, babies' smiles, roses, gardens,—his imagination was a spacious Garden, where no vile insects could crawl in; his apprehension a 'COURT' where no foul thoughts kept 'leets and holy-days.'

Snail and worm, give no offence,
Newt nor blind worm be not seen,
Come not near our fairy queen.

You must read Bishop Taylor with allowances for the subjects on which he wrote, and the age in which. You may skip or patiently endure his tedious discourses on rites and ceremonies, Baptism, and the Eucharist, the Clerical function, and the antiquity of Episcopacy, a good deal of which are inserted in works not purely controversial; his polemical works you may skip altogether, unless you have a taste for the exertions of vigorous reason and subtle distinguishing on uninteresting topics. Such of his works as you should begin with, to get a taste for him (after which your Love will lead you to his Polemical and drier works as Love led Leander 'over boots' knee-deep thro' the Hellespont), but read first the *Holy Living and Dying*, and his *Life of Christ and Sermons*, both in folio. And, above all, try to get a beautiful little tract on the 'Measures and offices of Friendship,' printed with his *opuscula* duodecimo, and also at the end of his Polemical Discourses in folio. Another thing you will observe in Bp.

Taylor, without which consideration you will do him injustice. He wrote to different classes of people. His *Holy Living and Dying* and *Life of Christ* were designed and have been used as popular books of family Devotion, and have been thumbed by old women, and laid about in the window seats of old houses in great families, like the Bible, and the 'Queene-like-Closet or rare booke of Recipes in medicine and cookery, fitted to all capacities.'

Accordingly in these *the fancy* is perpetually applied to; any slight conceit, allusion, or analogy, any 'prettiness,' a story true or false, serves for an argument adapted to women and young persons, and 'incompetent judgments'; whereas the *Liberty of Prophecy* (a book in your father's bookcase) is a series of severe and masterly reasoning, fitted to great Clerks and learned Fathers, with no more of Fancy than is subordinate and ornamental.—Such various powers had the Bishop of Down and Connor, Administrator of the See of Dromore!

My theme and my glory!—Farewell.

C. LAMB.

[Phineas Fletcher's poem *The Purple Island* was published in 1633.

Jeremy Taylor needs no note. Lamb was always lyrical about his non-apocryphal writings.

'A Lover of Willy.' Shakespeare, I assume.

'Leets and holy-days.' See *Othello*, IV. iii. 137-40.

'Snail and worm.' See *Midsummer Night's Dream*, II. ii. 23.]

104. TO WILLIAM GODWIN

June 29, 1801.

DEAR SIR,

Doctor Christy's Brother and Sister are come to town, and have shown me great civilities. I in return wish to requite them, having, by *God's grace*, principles of generosity *implanted* (as the moralists say) in my nature, which have been duly cultivated and watered by good and religious friends, and a pious education. They have picked up in the northern parts of the island an astonishing admiration of the great author of the New Philosophy in England, and I have ventured to promise their taste an

evening's gratification by seeing Mr. Godwin *face to face!!!*
 Will you do them and me *in* them the pleasure of drinking tea
 and supping with me at the *old* number 16 on Friday or Saturday
 next? An early nomination of the day will very much oblige
 yours sincerely,
 CH. LAMB.

[Dr. Christy's brother and sister I do not identify.

It might be worth recording as an incident that when Randal Norris was
 married to Elizabeth Faint, at St. Bride's, Fleet Street, on 8th July 1801,
 Mary Lamb was well enough to be one of the witnesses.]

105. TO ROBERT LLOYD

June 26, 1801.

Cooke in 'Richard the Third' is a perfect caricature. He gives
 you the *monster* Richard, but not the *man* Richard. Shakspeare's
 bloody character impresses you with awe and deep admiration of
 his witty parts, his consummate hypocrisy, and indefatigable
 prosecution of purpose. You despise, detest, and loathe the
 cunning, vulgar, low and fierce Richard, which Cooke substitutes
 in his place. He gives you no other idea than of a vulgar villain,
 rejoicing in his being able to overreach, and not possessing that
 joy in *silent* consciousness, but betraying it, like a *poor* villain, in
 sneers and distortions of the face, like a droll at a country fair;
 not to add that cunning so self-betraying and manner so vulgar
 could never have deceived the politic Buckingham nor the soft
 Lady Anne: *both* bred in courts, would have turned with disgust
 from such a fellow. Not but Cooke has *powers*; but not of
 discrimination. His manner is strong, coarse, and vigorous, and
 well adapted to some characters. But the lofty imagery and high
 sentiments and high passions of *Poetry* come black and prose-
 smoked from his prose Lips. I have not seen him in Overreach,
 but from what I remember of the character, I think he could not
 have chosen one more fit. I thought the play a highly finished
 one when I read it some time back. I *remember* a most noble
 image. Sir Giles, drawing his sword in the last scene, says:

Some undone widow sits upon mine arm,
 And takes away the use on't.

This is horribly fine, and I am not sure that it did not suggest

to me my conclusion of *Pride's Cure*; but my imitation is miserably inferior:

This arm was busy in the day of Naseby:
'Tis paralytic now, and knows no use of weapons.

Pierre and Jaffier are the best things in Otway. Belvidera is a poor Creature, and has had more than her due fame. Monimia is a little better, but she *whines*. I like Calista in the *Fair Penitent* better than either of Otway's women. Lee's *Massacre of Paris* is a noble play, very chastely and finely written. His Alexander is full of that madness 'which rightly should possess a poet's brain.' *Edipus* is also a fine play, but less so than these two. It is a joint production of Lee and Dryden. *All For Love* begins with uncommon Spirit, but soon flags, and is of no worth upon the whole. The last scene of Young's *Revenge* is sublime: the rest of it not worth id.

I want to have your opinion and Plumstead's on Cooke's *Richard the Third*. I am possessed with an admiration of the genuine Richard, his genius, and his mounting spirit, which no consideration of his cruelties can depress. Shakspeare has not made Richard so black a Monster as is supposed. Wherever he is monstrous, it was to conform to vulgar opinion. But he is generally a Man. Read his most exquisite address to the Widowed Queen to court her daughter for him—the topics of maternal feeling, of a deep knowledge of the heart, are such as no monster could have supplied. Richard must have *felt* before he could feign so well; tho' ambition choked the good seed. I think it the most finished piece of Eloquence in the world; of *persuasive* oratory far above Demosthenes, Burke, or any man, far exceeding the courtship of Lady Anne. Her relenting is barely natural, after all; the more perhaps S.'s merit to make *impossible* appear *probable*, but the *Queen's consent* (taking in all the circumstances and topics, *private* and *public*, with his angelic address, able to draw the host of [piece cut out of letter] Lucifer) is *probable*; and [piece cut out of letter] resisted it. This observation applies to many other parts. All the inconsistency is, that Shakspeare's better genius was forced to struggle against the prejudices which made a monster of Richard. He set out to paint a *monster*, but his human sympathies produced a *man*.

Are you not tired with all this *ingenious* criticism? I am.

Richard itself is totally metamorphosed in the wretched *acting play* of that name, which you will see, altered by *Cibber*.

God bless you.

C. LAMB.

[Cooke was George Frederick Cooke, upon whom, in this part, Lamb wrote a notice for the *Morning Post* for 8th January 1802. The summarized criticisms of the seventeenth-century drama are another foretaste of the notes to the *Dramatic Specimens* which Lamb was to be busy with a few years later.

Plumstead was one of the Lloyd brothers.]

106. TO WALTER WILSON

August 14th, 1801.

DEAR WILSON,

I am extremely sorry that any serious difference should subsist between us on account of some foolish behaviour of mine at Richmond; you knew me well enough before—that a very little liquor will cause a considerable alteration in me.

I beg you to impute my conduct solely to that, and not to any deliberate intention of offending you, from whom I have received so many friendly attentions. I know that you think a very important difference in opinion with respect to some more serious subjects between us makes me a dangerous companion; but do not rashly infer, from some slight and light expressions which I may have made use of in a moment of levity in your presence, without sufficient regard to your feelings—do not conclude that I am an inveterate enemy to all religion. I have had a time of seriousness, and I have known the importance and reality of a religious belief. Latterly, I acknowledge, much of my seriousness has gone off, whether from new company or some other new associations; but I still retain at bottom a conviction of the truth, and a certainty of the usefulness of religion. I will not pretend to more gravity or feeling than I at present possess; my intention is not to persuade you that any great alteration is probable in me; sudden converts are superficial and transitory; I only want you to believe that I have *stamina* of seriousness within me, and that I desire nothing more than a return of that friendly intercourse which used to subsist between us, but which my folly has suspended.

Believe me, very affectionately yours,

C. LAMB.

[Walter Wilson (1781-1847) was, perhaps, at this time, or certainly previously, in the India House with Lamb. Later he became a bookseller, and then in 1812, on inheriting money from John Walter, of *The Times*, to whom he was related, he became owner of a share in that paper and entered at the Inner Temple. We meet him again many years later in the correspondence, in connection with his *Life of Defoe*, 1830.

Some personal recollections and a character-sketch of Lamb, written by Wilson in 1836, which have recently come to light, contain a passage referring to the Richmond escapade. Thus:

The propensity of my friend to fun and frolic, would occasionally bring him into scrapes; and his harmless sports terminated sometimes otherwise than he intended. Of some such I have been myself an eye-witness. But every one knew that there was not a particle of malignity in his composition; and I am not aware that any one ever cherished the least feeling of animosity towards him. Indeed, the reverse of this I have known to be the case, as soon as the unlucky sufferer had time to recover from his surprise. He was a good judge of human character, and could discriminate between the excellencies and the weaknesses that reside in the same individual. It was one of his leading characteristics to shoot folly as it flies; and his habitual readiness enabled him to grasp the fitting occasion for discharging his arrows of wit and ridicule, although more in the way of harmless mirth than of caustic severity. Cheerfulness was a predominant feature in his character; and he was desirous of imparting that feeling to others which contributed so materially to his own happiness. He had an instinctive desire for life, and I have heard him say, in his own strong language, when a young man, that he would rather live on board the galleys than not live at all. He possessed more refinement of mind than of manners, and was ever ready to make ample amends for his indiscretions. In the hilarity of the moment he would sometimes play off his jokes upon his own friends, who knew him too well to take umbrage at such things. . . .

Some of his frolics, however, were of a more dangerous description. I remember going with him by water upon a party of pleasure to Richmond, accompanied by some of our mutual acquaintances. Upon our return to town, after roaming about the delightful scenery of the neighbourhood, those in the boat found the utmost difficulty in restraining him from the performance of some of his accustomed gambols. Not satisfied with sporting his wit, he was for giving it [vent?]¹ by those bodily movements that were quite unsuited to so unsteady a conveyance in the watery element. The consequence was that the boat was within a hair's-breadth of being upset; and if none of us had received any other injury than a ducking I believe he was the only one who would have viewed it in the nature of a sport. He had placed us all, however, in imminent peril; and the contemplation of it after our escape was anything but satisfactory. Availing myself of the privilege of a friend, I wrote to him a letter of remonstrance upon his conduct, desecanting at the same time upon some other matters in amicable debate between

¹ Illegible in the original.

us. Like the late Rowland Hill, he could not restrain his wit, even upon the most solemn subjects. This I considered offensive, and expressed myself accordingly. His reply, which I have still by me, was just such as might be expected from a right-minded person, whose heart also was in its right place. Characterized by simplicity, by good feeling, and by an excellent judgment, it was calculated to produce all the effect he could desire, and which it did produce. Our friendship did not suffer a momentary interruption; nor am I conscious that so much as an angry word ever passed between us. I always found him the same kind single-hearted creature, and now look back upon our early intercourse with unmixed pleasure and satisfaction.

One wonders if the following passage in Hazlitt's essay 'On Coffee-House Politicians' in *Table Talk* has any reference to the Richmond incident:

Elia, the grave and witty, says things not to be surpassed in essence: but the manner is more painful and less a relief to my own thoughts. Some one conceived he could not be an excellent companion, because he was seen walking down the side of the Thames, *passibus iniquis*, after dining at Richmond. The objection was not valid.]

107. TO THOMAS MANNING

[22nd August 1801.]

DEAR MANNING,

I have forborne writing so long (and so have you, for the matter of that), until I am almost ashamed either to write or to forbear any longer. But as your silence may proceed from some worse cause than neglect—from illness, or some mishap which may have befallen you—I begin to be anxious. You may have been burnt out, or you may have married, or you may have broken a limb, or turned country parson; any of these would be excuse sufficient for not coming to my supper. I am not so unforgiving as the nobleman in 'Saint Mark.' For me, nothing new has happened to me, unless that the poor 'Albion' died last Saturday of the world's neglect, and with it the fountain of my puns is choked up for ever.

All the Lloyds wonder that you do not write to them. They apply to me for the cause. Relieve me from this weight of ignorance, and enable me to give a truly oracular response.

I have been confined some days with swelled cheek and rheumatism—they divide and govern me with a viceroy-headache in the middle. I can neither write nor read without great pain. It must be something like obstinacy that I choose this time to write to you in after many months interruption.

I will close my letter of simple inquiry with an epigram on Mackintosh, the 'Vindiciæ Gallicæ'-man—who has got a place at last—one of the last I *did* for the 'Albion':—

Though thou'rt like Judas, an apostate black,
In the resemblance one thing thou dost lack;
When he had gotten his ill-purchas'd pelf,
He went away, and wisely hanged himself:
This thou may [may'st] do at last, yet much I doubt,
If thou hast any Bowels to gush out!

Yours, as ever,

C. LAMB.

[The *Albion* was at the time of its decease owned and edited by John Fenwick, a friend of Lamb's whom we shall meet again. Lamb told the story in the *Elia* essay on 'Newspapers' in the following passage:

From the office of the Morning Post (for we may as well exhaust our Newspaper Reminiscences at once) by change of property in the paper, we were transferred, mortifying exchange! to the office of the Albion Newspaper, late Rackstrow's Museum, in Fleet Street. What a transition—from a handsome apartment, from rose-wood desks, and silver inkstands, to an office—no office, but a *den* rather, but just redeemed from the occupation of dead monsters, of which it seemed redolent—from the centre of loyalty and fashion, to a focus of vulgarity and sedition! Here in murky closet, inadequate from its square contents to the receipt of the two bodies of Editor, and humble paragraph-maker, together at one time, sat in the discharge of his new Editorial functions (the 'Bigod' of *Elia*) the redoubted John Fenwick.

F., without a guinea in his pocket, and having left not many in the pockets of his friends whom he might command, had purchased (on tick doubtless) the whole and sole Editorship, Proprietorship, with all the rights and titles (such as they were worth) of the Albion, from one Lovell; of whom we know nothing, save that he had stood in the pillory for a libel on the Prince of Wales. With this hopeless concern—for it had been sinking ever since its commencement, and could now reckon upon not more than a hundred subscribers—F. resolutely determined upon pulling down the Government in the first instance, and making both our fortunes by way of corollary. For seven weeks and more did this infatuated Democrat go about borrowing seven shilling pieces, and lesser coin, to meet the daily demands of the Stamp Office, which allowed no credit to publications of that side in politics. An outcast from politer bread, we attached our small talents to the forlorn fortunes of our friend. Our occupation now was to write treason.

Recollections of feelings—which were all that now remained from our first boyish heats kindled by the French Revolution, when, if we were misled, we erred in the company of some, who are accounted very good men now—rather than any tendency at this time to Republican doctrines—assisted us in assuming a style of writing, while the paper lasted, consonant in no very

under-tone to the right earnest fanaticism of F. Our cue was now to insinuate, rather than recommend, possible abdications. Blocks, axes, Whitehall tribunals, were covered with flowers of so cunning a periphrasis—as Mr. Bayes says, never naming the *thing* directly—that the keen eye of an Attorney-General was insufficient to detect the lurking snake among them. There were times, indeed, when we sighed for our more gentleman-like occupation under Stuart. But with change of masters it is ever change of service. Already one paragraph, and another, as we learned afterwards from a gentleman at the Treasury, had begun to be marked at that office, with a view of its being submitted at least to the attention of the proper Law Officers—when an unlucky, or rather lucky epigram from our pen, aimed at Sir J——s M——h, who was on the eve of departing for India to reap the fruits of his apostasy, as F. pronounced it, (it is hardly worth particularising), happening to offend the nice sense of Lord, or, as he then delighted to be called, Citizen Stanhope, deprived F. at once of the last hopes of a guinea from the last patron that had stuck by us; and breaking up our establishment, left us to the safe, but somewhat mortifying, neglect of the Crown Lawyers.

There are, however, in Lamb's account, written thirty years afterwards, some errors. He passed rather from the *Albion* to the *Post* than from the *Post* to the *Albion*, as the notes to a subsequent letter will show. Sir James Mackintosh was not in 1801 on the eve of departing for India: he did not get the post of Recordship of Bombay until two years later. The epigram probably referred to an earlier rumour of a post for him. His apostasy consisted in recanting in 1800 from the opinions set forth in his *Vindicta Gallica*, 1791, a book supporting the French Revolutionists, and in becoming a close friend of his old enemy Burke. I have not succeeded in finding a file of the *Albion*, nor, I believe, has any one else.

Fenwick, I may say here, after a period of imprisonment for debt, evaded and disappeared, leaving the Lambs to be as helpful as they could to his wife, and to his daughter, Eliza, who became an actress. (See *The Fate of the Fenwicks*, by A. F. Wedd, 1927.) Now and then the mother and daughter stayed with them, and I have seen, in America, a copy of *Elia* with the inscription, 'Elia to his old and best friends, Mrs. Fenwick and her good daughter.' Terms so warm fortify the assumption that there must have been many letters to the Fenwicks, both from Lamb and his sister; but none has come to light.

'The nobleman in "St. Mark."' Lamb was thinking of Luke xiv 16, 24.]

108. TO THOMAS MANNING

[P.M. 31st August 1801.]

I heard that you were going to China, with a commission from the Wedgwoods to collect hints for their pottery, and to teach

the Chinese *perspective*. But I did *not* know that *London* lay in your way to Peking. I am seriously glad of it, for I shall trouble you with a small present for the Emperor of Usbeck Tartary, as you go by his territories: it is a fragment of a 'Dissertation on the state of political parties in England at the end of the eighteenth century,' which will no doubt be very interesting to his Imperial Majesty. It was written originally in English for the use of the *two* and *twenty* readers of 'The Albion' (this *calculation* includes a printer, four pressmen, and a devil); but becoming of no use when 'The Albion' stopped, I got it translated into Usbeck Tartar by my good friend Tibet Kulm, who is come to London with a *civil* invitation from the Cham to the English nation to go over to the worship of the Lama.

'The Albion' is dead—dead as nail in door—and my revenues have died with it; but I am not as a man without hope. I have got a sort of opening to the 'Morning Chronicle,'!!! Mister Manning, by means of that common dispenser of benevolence, Mister Dyer. I have not seen Perry the editor yet: but I am preparing a specimen. I shall have a difficult job to manage, for you must know that Mister Perry, in common with the great body of the Whigs, thinks 'The Albion' *very low*. I find I must rise a peg or so, be a little more decent and less abusive; for, to confess the truth, I had arrived to an abominable pitch; I spared neither age nor sex when my cue was given me. *Ni'mport* (as they say in French): any climate will suit me. So you are about to bring your old face-making face to London. You could not come in a better time for my purposes; for I have just lost Rickman, a faint idea of whose character I sent you. He is gone to Ireland for a year or two, to make his fortune; and I have lost by his going, what [it] seems to me I can never recover—a *finished man*. His memory will be to me as the brazen serpent to the Israelites,—I shall look up to it, to keep me upright and honest. But he may yet bring back his honest face to England one day. I wish your affairs with the Emperor of China had not been *so urgent*, that you might have stayed in Great Britain a year or two longer, to have seen him; for, judging from *my own* experience, I almost dare pronounce you never saw his equal. I never saw a man that could be at all a second or substitute for him in any sort.

Imagine that what is here erased was an apology and explanation,

perfectly satisfactory you may be sure! for rating this man so highly at the expense of —, and —, and —, and M—, and —, and —, and —. But Mister Burke has explained this phenomenon of our nature very prettily in his letter to a Member of the National Assembly, or else in his Appeal to the old Whigs, I forget which. Do you remember an instance from Homer (who understood these matters tolerably well) of Priam driving away his other sons with expressions of wrath and bitter reproach, when Hector was just dead.

I live where I did, in a *private* manner, because I don't like *state*. Nothing is so disagreeable to me as the clamours and applauses of the mob. For this reason I live in an *obscure* situation in one of the courts of the Temple. C. L.

[In Ainger's edition this letter has a postscript which belongs to an earlier one. This has been newly copied at Pasadena.

Manning had taken up Chinese at Cambridge, and in 1800 he moved to Paris to study the language under Dr. Hagaz. He did not, however, go to China until 1806. The Wedgwoods were Coleridge's patrons. Lamb's reference to them is, of course, a joke.

'Dead as nail in door.' 2 *Henry IV*, v. iii. 123-4.

The *Morning Chronicle* was then the chief Whig paper, the principal opponent of the *Morning Post*. I have, I think, traced two or three of Lamb's contributions to the *Chronicle* at this period, but they are not of his best. He quickly moved on to the *Post*, but, as we shall see, only for a short period.

Rickman went to Dublin in 1801 with Abbot, the Chief Secretary for Ireland, and was appointed Deputy-Keeper of the Privy Seal. He returned in February 1802.

The reference to Burke is to his justification of his particular solicitude for the Crown, as the part of the British Constitution then in danger, though not in itself more important than the other parts, in the 'Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs.' The Priam-Hector illustration is there employed.

'Homer.' See the *Iliad*, Book xxiv. lines 248-51. Pope translates thus:

Next on his sons his erring fury falls,
Polites, Paris, Agathon, he calls;
His threats Deiphobus and Dius hear,
Hippochoüs, Pammon, Helenus the seer,
And generous Antiphon: for yet these nine
Survived, sad relics of his numerous line.]

109. TO WILLIAM GODWIN

Sep. 9, 1801.

DEAR SIR,

Nothing runs in my head when I think of your story, but that you should make it as like the life of Savage as possible. That is a known and familiar tale, and its effect on the public mind has been very great. Many of the incidents in the true history are readily made dramatical. For instance, Savage used to walk backwards and forwards o' nights to his mother's window, to catch a glimpse of her, as she passed with a candle. With some such situation the play might happily open. I would plunge my Hero, exactly like Savage, into difficulties and embarrassments, the consequences of an unsettled mind: out of which he may be extricated by the unknown interference of his mother. He should be attended from the beginning by a friend, who should stand in much the same relation towards him as Horatio to Altamont in the play of the Fair Penitent. A character of this sort seems indispensable. This friend might gain interviews with the mother, when the son was refused sight of her. Like Horatio with Calista, he might wring his [her?] soul. Like Horatio, he might learn the secret *first*. He might be exactly in the same perplexing situation, when he had learned it, whether to tell it or conceal it from the Son (I have still Savage in my head) [the Son] might *kill* a man (as he did) in an affray—he should receive a pardon, as Savage did—and the mother might interfere to have him *banished*. This should provoke the Friend to demand an interview with her husband, and disclose the whole secret. The husband, refusing to believe anything to her dishonour, should fight with him. The husband repents before he dies. The mother explains and confesses everything in his presence. The son is admitted to an interview with his now acknowledged mother. Instead of embraces, she resolves to abstract herself from all pleasure, even from his sight, in voluntary penance all her days after. This is crude indeed!! but I am totally unable to suggest a better. I am the worst hand in the world at a plot. But I understand enough of passion to predict that your story, with some of Savage's, which has no repugnance, but a natural alliance with it, cannot fail. The mystery of the

suspected relationship—the suspicion, generated from slight and forgotten circumstances, coming at last to act as Instinct, and so to be mistaken for Instinct—the son's unceasing pursuit and throwing of himself in his mother's way, something like Falkland's eternal persecution of Williams—the high and intricate passion in the mother, the being obliged to shun and keep at a distance the thing nearest to her heart—to be cruel, where her heart yearns to be kind, without a possibility of explanation. You have the power of life and death and the hearts of your auditors in your hands; still Harris will want a skeleton, and he must have it. I can only put in some sorry hints. The discovery to the son's friend may take place not before the 3d act—in some such way as this. The mother may cross the street—he may point her out to some gay companion of his as the Beauty of Leghorn—the pattern for wives, &c. &c. His companion, who is an Englishman, laughs at his mistake, and knows her to have been the famous Nancy Dawson, or any one else, who captivated the English king. Some such way seems dramatic, and speaks to the Eye. The audience will enter into the Friend's surprise, and into the perplexity of his situation. These Ocular Scenes are so many great landmarks, rememberable headlands and lighthouses in the voyage. Macbeth's witch has a good advice to a magic [? tragic] writer, what to do with his spectator.

Show his eyes, and grieve his heart.

The most difficult thing seems to be, What to do with the husband? You will not make him jealous of his own son? that is a stale and an unpleasant trick in Douglas, &c. Can't you keep him out of the way till you want him, as the husband of Isabella is conveniently sent off till his cue comes? There will be story enough without him, and he will only puzzle all. Catastrophes are worst of all. Mine is most stupid. I only propose it to fulfil my engagement, not in hopes to convert you.

It is always difficult to get rid of a woman at the end of a tragedy. *Men* may fight and die. A woman must either take poison, *which is a nasty trick*, or go mad, which is not fit to be shown, or retire, which is poor, only retiring is most reputable.

I am sorry I can furnish you no better: but I find it extremely difficult to settle my thoughts upon anything but the scene before

me, when I am from home, I am from home so seldom. If any, the least hint crosses me, I will write again, and I very much wish to read your plan, if you could abridge and send it. In this little scrawl you must take the will for the deed, for I most sincerely wish success to your play.—Farewell,

C. L.

[This and Letter No. 112 that follows it contain Lamb's suggestions for Godwin's play *Faulkener*, upon which he was now meditating, but which was not performed until 1807. Lamb wrote the prologue, a poem in praise of Defoe, since it was in *Roxana*, or at least in one edition of it, that the counterpart to, or portion of, Godwin's plot is found. There, however, the central figure is a daughter, not a son. See the letters to Walter Wilson.

Swinburne, in the little article to which I have already alluded, says of this and the following letter: 'Several of Lamb's suggestions, in spite of his own modest disclaimer ("I am the worst hand in the world at a plot"), seem to me, especially as coming from the author of a tragedy memorable alike for sweetness of moral emotion and emptiness of theatrical subject, worthy of note for the instinctive intuition of high dramatic effect implied in their rough and rapid outlines.'

Richard Savage, the poet, whose life Johnson wrote, claimed to be the illegitimate son of Lady Macclesfield by Lord Rivers. Savage killed Sinclair in a tavern quarrel in 1727, and was condemned to death. His pardon was obtained by the Countess of Hertford.

The Fair Penitent is by Nicholas Rowe.

Falkland and Williams are in Godwin's novel *Caleb Williams*, dramatized by Colman as *The Iron Chest*.

'Harris will want a skeleton.' Thomas Harris, stage manager of Covent Garden Theatre.

Nancy Dawson (1730?-67), the famous dancer and *bona roba*.

Douglas—Home's tragedy.

'The husband of Isabella.' In Southern's *Fatal Marriage*.]

110. TO THOMAS MANNING

[*Early October or end of September 1801.*]

Pray what maps do you use, when you travel? Perhaps you have hit upon one that leaves London *out*.—Do let me send you down a complete set of Mercator's Charts, or Carrington Bowles's Survey of England, against you travel next. You certainly *imagined* that London had been in your road; and *misled me*.

White writes me word from the country, where he is gone to

recruit his strength, that he goes groping in all the hedges and copses about Oxford among daisies, Kingcups, and pissabeds, for the seeds of poetry, which George Dyer will still have it are to be found there!—[*Letter torn.*]

He says that Sam. Taylor Coleridge appears to him as much as ever under the influence of a cold vanity, and does not spare *absentem rodere amicum*. Is my Latin correct? Pity, that such human frailties should perch upon the margin of Ulswater Lake. 'Pity,' say all the echoes in such a tone, so plaintive, I wish I had my flute. [*Words erased.*]

Lloyd's four brothers are grown choice Lads—they swagger about Birmingham streets, and get drunk at Coffee houses, and beat the Watch—almost as great a metamorphosis to some of them, as the transformation of Roderick Random, the carrotty waggon-passenger and co-mate of Barber Strap [*words erased*] into a fine gent and [*letter torn*]

about town—ALL the world. [*Letter torn.*]

Do you trouble your head about Peace? or the Northern Confederacy? I want to know where you bestow your Interest—for every man has an interest, such as it is, in his breast—as Lord Hamlet says—'every man has business and affairs.'—I feel as if I were going to leave off business—

Don't mistake me, I only feel so just now. Sometimes I am very busy about nothing.

But seriously what do you think of this Life of ours? Can you make head or tail on't? How we came here (that I have some tolerable bawdy hint of) what we came here for (that I know no more than [an] Ideot.)

You dropt a word whether in jest or earnest, as if you would join me in some work, such as a review or series of papers, essays, or anything.—Were you serious? I want some occupation, and I more want money. Had you any scheme, or was it, as G. Dyer says, *en passant*? If I don't have a Legacy left me shortly, I must get into pay with some newspaper for small gains. Mutton is twelve-pence a pound.

There, there is a full three sides for you.—

C. L.

['*Absentem rodere amicum.*' Horace denounces as a black sheep the man who slanders another behind his back. *Satires*, I. iv. 81.

'The Peace.' The Battle of Copenhagen on 2nd April 1801 had broken up Napoleon's northern alliance. This being followed by the death of the Czar Paul, the Treaty of Amiens on 25th March 1802 was in train and peace was prematurely celebrated. Such things would not interest Lamb.

'Every man has business and affairs.' A variation of *Hamlet*, I. v.]

III. TO JOHN RICKMAN

[16th September 1801.]

DEAR RICKMAN,

Your Letter has found me at Margate, where I am come with Mary to drink sea water and pick up shells. I am glad to hear that your new dignities sit so easy upon you. No doubt you are one of those easy 'well dressed' gentlemen, that we may know at first sight to belong to the 'Castle,' when we meet them in the Park. Your Letter contains a very fair offer about my Play, which I must first dispatch. I seriously feel very much obliged to you *and all that*, but I have a scheme in my head to print it about Xmas time, when the Town is fuller!! about that time I expect the repayment of a Loan, which was bigger than I ought to have trusted, but I hope not bigger than my borrowing friend will then be able to repay. If he should disappoint me, I may throw myself upon you: meantime I am too proud ever to etc. . . . I do not write in *any* paper. George Dyer, that common Lyar of Benevolence, has taken some pains to introduce me to the *Morning Chronicle*, and I did something for them, but I soon found that it was a different thing writing for the Lordly Editor of the great Whig Paper to what it was scribbling for the poor *Albion*. More than three-fourths of what I did was superciliously rejected; whereas in the old *Albion* the seal of my well-known handwriting was enough to drive any nonsense current. I believe I shall give up this way of writing, and turn honest, scramble on as well as I can for a year, and make a Book, for why should every creature make books but I?

G. Burnett had just finished his Essay when I came away. Mushrooms scramble up in a night; but diamonds, you know, lie a long while ripening in the bed. The purport of it is to persuade the world that opinions tending to the subversion of Established Religion and Governments, systems of medicine, etc., should

not be rashly vented in every company: a good orthodox doctrine which has been preached up with the 'holy text of Pike and Gun' with you in Ireland, and is pretty familiar in England, but it is novel to George; at least he never wrote an Essay upon the subject before. Critics should think of this, before they loosely cry out, This is commonplace, what is there new in it? it may be all new to the Author, *he* may never have thought of it before, and it may have cost him as much brain-sweat as a piece of the most inveterate originality. However George is in pretty good keeping, while the merits of his essay lie under consideration. He has got into joint rooms with a young Surgeon, whose Uncle is an eminent wine merchant, and gives his nephew long tick, so they drink two sorts of wine, and live happy. George was turned out of his White Friars Lodging because he wanted too much attendance. He used to call up the girl, and send her down again, because he had forgot what he wanted; and then call her again, when his thought came back, to ask what a Clock it was. Fenwick has been urgent with me to write to you about his plan, and I gave him a drunken promise that I would, but you have saved me a disagreeable topic, for I know you have enough to do, and must serve him at your leisure. The Welfare of Ireland, perhaps of the whole world, must not stand still, while the interests of a newspaper are debating!! He is very sanguine, and if he tells true, he has had very important encouragement; but he always said and thought, that the *Albion* had very sufficient patronage. Some people can *see anything* but their own interest, and they chuse to look at that through glasses. Dr. Christie has transported his solemn physiognomy to Portsmouth in his way to India. He departed without calling upon me, tho' he never could have called upon a more welcome occasion; consequently he did not get your letter, but I imparted its contents to his brother. I know no more news from here, except that the Professor (Godwin) is *COURTING*. The Lady is a Widow¹ with green spectacles and one child, and the Professor is grown quite juvenile. He bows when he is spoke to, and smiles without occasion, and wriggles as fantastically as Malvolio, and has more affectation than a canary bird pluming his feathers when he thinks somebody looks at him. He lays down his spectacles, as if in

¹ A very disgusting woman.

scorn, and takes 'em up again from necessity, and winks that she mayn't see he gets sleepy about eleven o'Clock. You never saw such a philosophic coxcomb, nor any one play the Romeo so unnaturally. His second play, my god-son, is flatly rejected by Harris, because it is a Persian story about Shaw Abbas and the valiant Sefi his son: but Harris has offered to pay him at all events, if he will take a domestic plain story, not heroic nor foreign; so, after many indignant declarations that he could not bear such a *creeping way* (his expression) his proud heart has come down to Harris's proposals; so he is filching a tale out of one of Defoe's novels, and has made me write him hints. Floreat Tertia!—

Margate, Wednesday, 16 Sept.,
where I stay a week longer.

And now farewell, Master Secretary!—and if your Diplomatic Majesty has any commissions for tape or bone lace, etc. in London, depend upon a faithful performance of the same. I could find matter for a longer Letter, and will another day, if you will find time to read it. Meantime believe me, yours sincerely. Mary sends her kindest remembrances. No hurry for the Pork.

C. LAMB.

John Rickman, Esq.,
Dublin Castle.

[This letter is the first to dwell on George Burnett, a literary worker of disorderly mind and ill-regulated life, who had fastened on Rickman and tried his patience to the utmost. Burnett was born probably in 1776. He went to Balliol, met Southey and Coleridge, and became a Pantisocratist. Subsequently he became a dissenting minister at Yarmouth, and then a medical student at Edinburgh; and later he succeeded George Dyer as tutor in the family of Lord Stanhope. He became one of the hacks of Richard Phillips the publisher. His principal work was the *Specimens of English Prose Writers*, 1807, in three volumes, in which it has been stated that Lamb had a hand. He died in want in 1811. We shall see more of him from time to time.

Mrs. Anderson came to the conclusion that Lamb's newspaper connections were brief and as follows:

- (1) *The Albion*, edited by John Fenwick, probably from about mid-June to 22nd August 1801.
- (2) *The Morning Chronicle*, edited by Perry, from about 1st–15th September 1801.
- (3) *The Morning Post*, edited by Daniel Stuart, from 11th December 1801 to 12th February 1802.

(4) The *Morning Post*, edited by Nicholas Byrne (who bought it September 1803 from Stuart for £25,000), from October 1803 to some date before 13th March 1804.

Godwin's Persian play never was acted. Thomas Harris refused it for Covent Garden, and both Sheridan and John Philip Kemble were approached for Drury Lane to no purpose.

Godwin's new wife was the widow Clairmont, with a son and a daughter, Mary Jane, who was destined or doomed to meet Byron. Having taken the next house to the professor, Mrs. Clairmont started the campaign with the words: 'Is it possible that I behold the immortal Godwin?' The answer being in the affirmative, she proceeded to annex him. Lamb was far from being lonely in his aversion. Mrs. Fenwick, who became manager of the publishing business which the Godwins opened pseudonymously, and for which the Lambs wrote their children's books, says in one of her letters to Mary Hays: 'I abhor its author, Godwin, but infinitely more his wife, who of all human beings is the object of my sincerest detestation.' We must, however, remember that but for the second Mrs. Godwin, the Lambs might have written none of their books for children.

This was Lamb's second visit to Margate, the first being when he was fifteen, as he tells us in the *Elia* essay, 'The Old Margate Hoy.' I doubt if he was there again until 1821.

'Holy text of Pike and Gun' is from *Hudibras*.]

112. TO WILLIAM GODWIN

(Fragment)

Margate, Sept. 17, 1801.

I shall be glad to come home and talk these matters over with you. I have read your scheme very attentively. That Arabella has been mistress to King Charles is sufficient to all the purposes of the story. It can only diminish that respect we feel for her to make her turn whore to one of the Lords of his Bed-chamber. Her son must not know that she has been a whore: it matters not that she has been whore to a *King*: equally in both cases it is against decorum and against the delicacy of a son's respect that he should be privy to it. No doubt, many sons might feel a wayward pleasure in the honourable guilt of their mothers; but is it a true feeling? Is it the best sort of feeling? Is it a feeling to be exposed on theatres to mothers and daughters? Your conclusion (or rather Defoe's) comes far short of the tragic ending, which is always expected; and it is not safe to disappoint. A

tragic auditory wants *blood*. They care but little about a man and his wife parting. Besides, what will you do with the son, after all his pursuits and adventures? Even quietly leave him to take guinea-and-a-half lodgings with mamma in Leghorn! O impotent and pacific measures! . . . I am certain that you must mix up some strong ingredients of distress to give a savour to your pottage. I still think that you may, and must, graft the story of Savage upon Defoe. Your hero must *kill a man* or *do some thing*. Can't you bring him to the gallows or some great mischief, out of which she *must* have recourse to an explanation with her husband to save him. Think on this. The husband, for instance, has great friends in Court at Leghorn. The son is condemned to death. She cannot teaze him for a stranger. She must tell the whole truth. Or she *may* teaze him, as for a stranger, till (like Othello in Cassio's case) he begins to suspect her for her importunity. Or, being pardoned, can she not teaze her husband to get him banished? Something of this I suggested before. *Both* is best. The murder and the pardon will make business for the fourth act, and the banishment and explanation (by means of the *Friend* I want you to draw) the fifth. You must not open any of the truth to Dawley by means of a letter. A letter is a feeble messenger on the stage. Somebody, the son or his friend, must, as a *coup de main*, be exasperated, and obliged to tell the husband. Damn the husband and his 'gentlemanlike qualities.' Keep him out of sight, or he will trouble all. Let him be in England on trade, and come home, as Biron does in *Isabella*, in the fourth act, when he is wanted. I am for introducing situations, sort of counterparts to situations, which have been tried in other plays—*like* but not the *same*. On this principle I recommended a friend like Horatio in the 'Fair Penitent,' and on this principle I recommend a situation like Othello, with relation to Desdemona's intercession for Cassio. By-scenes may likewise receive hints. The son may see his mother at a mask or feast, as Romeo, Juliet. The festivity of the company contrasts with the strong perturbations of the individuals. Dawley may be told his wife's past unchastity at a mask by some witch-character—as Macbeth upon the heath, in dark sentences. This may stir his brain, and be forgot, but come in aid of stronger proof hereafter. From this, what you will perhaps call whimsical way of counterparting,

this honest stealing, and original mode of plagiarism, much yet, I think, remains to be sucked. Excuse these abortions. I thought you would want the draught soon again, and I would not send it empty away.—Yours truly,

WILLIAM GODWIN!!!

Somers Town, 17th Sept., 1801.

[The reason for humorously signing this letter with Godwin's name and adding his address (Lamb, it will be noticed, was then at Margate) is that Godwin had (1) recently addressed to Lamb an unsigned letter, and (2) that he was exceedingly anxious that his name should not be mentioned as the author of the play.]

113. TO JOHN RICKMAN

[Not dated: 9th October or thereabouts, 1801.]

I called lately upon our common friend G. Dyer of Cliffords Inn. I found him inconsolable and very dirty. It seems that Gilbert Wakefield is dead, and George had not got his tribute ready for Mr. Phillips's magazine this month, and Dr. Aikin had sent a little tribute, and Miss Aikin had also sent a *tribute*, and the world would expect a tribute from his pen. At first I imagined that George was touched with some sense of kindred mortality, such as Methusaleh himself must have felt, when he was qualmish; but no, all that disturbed George was, that he had not got a *tribute*. *George the second*, George Burnett, supt with me last night. He is not got quite well of the metaphyz, but I hope and trust that last night's paroxysm will be the last, and that his disorder has come to its crisis. He maintained that if a highwayman, who is going to kill you, *saves your life* on your expressly promising to *spare his*, that is, not to prosecute, you are under no obligation to keep your word, because you were in a state of violence, when the promise was made, and the Good of the Whole, which may be partially endangered by suffering that man to live, is to be preferred to any such promise in such circumstances made. If I ever turn freebooter, and light upon George Burnett in my travels, I shall remember what I have to trust to. But saving his metaphyz (which goes off after the first heats of youth like the green sickness) George the 2nd has good

parts. He only wants fortune. He as ill becomes adversity, as George the first would do prosperity, if any one should leave him a rich legacy. Another of fortune's *humble servants* is a visitor of mine, who in the language of antiquity would have been nominated Simonds-with-the-slit-lip. I cannot say his linen was of Tarsus, nor quite so robust as Russian, but it certainly craved bleaching, but saving his dirty shirt, and his physiognomy and his 'bacco box, together with a certain kiddy air in his walk, a man would have gone near to have mistaken him for a gentleman. He has a sort of ambition to be so misunderstood. It seems the Treasury does not pay with that weekly promptitude, and accommodating periodicalness, it was wont; and some constitutions *cannot wait*. He craved the loan of a half guinea; could I refuse a GENTLEMAN who seemed in distress? He dropt some words, as if he were desirous of trying what effect the Irish air would have upon a *poor* constitution. Couldn't you make him a door-keeper, or a game-keeper, or find some post for him, not altogether so brilliant as useful? Some situation under the *mint-master*?—I leave him to your mercy and ability. There is no hurry, for what you have given him will keep him in *work* some time, and for *pay*, why 'tis just as his Majesty's ministers shall please. So, Cottle's Psalms are come out hot press'd for six shillings. Of course I shall send you a copy. 'Poetry is never more delightfully employed than when in the service of its Creator.' Vide Preface to the Translation (if he had writ one, but he has not).

Quid majus!—the Professor is not married, the *Plough* is yet *in posse*—peace is all the cry here—fireworks, lights, etc., abound—White stationed himself at Temple Bar among the boys, and threw squibs; burned one man's cravat.—This is the cream of London intelligence—you shall have the earliest tidings of all new movements.

C. L.

[Gilbert Wakefield died 9th September 1801, a few months after his release from Dorchester Gaol.

'Mr. Phillips's magazine' would be the *Monthly Magazine*, of which Richard Phillips (knighted in 1808) was the proprietor and John Aikin the editor.

'Simonds-with-the-slit-lip.' Rickman, says Mrs. Anderson, had evidently given this gentleman employment on the Population returns, at the Cock-pit (Privy Council Offices) in Whitehall, where he had also given Burnett a trial ('left him a trifling task—ruling certain lines in the Population books, merely

to try his power of attention to anything like a fixed task. The unlucky wight who was to write in the said lines suffered for this, forced to go for the sheets one by one, to urge the gentleman daily for supply, sometimes finding him in bed at *One*, at other times at a stand on a plea of *wanting ink*, and finally by necessity the task thrown up in despair.'—Rickman to Southey, 26th November 1801).

Rickman again: 'The *Goule* also must be put on your list of remarkables; he is high on mine. If you see him not at Lamb's, call at the Cockpit; if the Population gentry are at work ask for Mr. Beaumont—and say who you are. If you converse with him three minutes, and, in casting round your eyes in pursuit of ugliness you do not detect Simmonds, I pronounce you have no taste or nose for *Goules*.' . . .

The Peace Preliminaries were signed on the evening of 1st October 1801.]

114. TO JOHN RICKMAN

[No date: ? November 1801.]

A letter from G. Dyer will probably accompany this. I wish I could convey to you any notion of the whimsical scenes I have been witness to in this fortnight past. 'Twas on Tuesday week the poor heathen scrambled up to my door about breakfast time. He came thro' a violent rain with no neckcloth on, and a *beard* that made him a spectacle to men and angels, and tap'd at the door. Mary open'd it, and he stood stark still and held a paper in his hand importing that he had been ill with a fever. He either wouldn't or couldn't speak except by signs. When you went to comfort him he put his hand upon his heart and shook his head and told us his complaint lay where no medicines could reach it. I was dispatch'd for Dr. Dale, Mr. Phillips of St. Paul's Church yard, and Mr. Frend, who is to be his executor. George solemnly delivered into Mr. Frend's hands and mine an old burnt preface that had been in the fire, with injunctions which we solemnly vow'd to obey that it should be printed after his death with his last corrections, and that some account should be given to the world why he had not fulfill'd his engagement with subscribers. Having done this and borrow'd two guineas of his bookseller (to whom he imparted in confidence that he should leave a great many loose papers behind him which would only want methodizing and arranging to prove very lucrative to any bookseller after his death), he laid himself down on my bed in a

mood of complacent resignation. By the aid of meat and drink put into him (for I all along suspected a vacuum) he was enabled to sit up in the evening, but he had not got the better of his intolerable fear of dying; he expressed such philosophic indifference in his speech and such frightened apprehensions in his physiognomy that if he had truly been dying, and I had known it, I could not have kept my countenance. In particular, when the doctor came and ordered him to take little white powders (I suppose of chalk or alum, to humour him), he ey'd him with a *suspicion* which I could not account for; he has since explain'd that he took it for granted Dr. Dale knew his situation and had ordered him these powders to hasten his departure that he might suffer as little pain as possible. Think what an aspect the heathen put on with these fears upon a dirty face. To recount all his freaks for two or three days while he thought he was going, and how the fit operated, and sometimes the man got uppermost and sometimes the author, and he had this excellent person to serve, and he must correct some proof sheets for Phillips, and he could not bear to leave his subscribers unsatisfy'd, but he must not think of these things now, he was going to a place where he should satisfy all his debts—and when he got a little better he began to discourse what a happy thing it would be if there was a place where all the good men and women in the world might meet, meaning heav'n, and I really believe for a time he had doubts about his soul, for he was very near, if not quite, light-headed. The fact was he had not had a good meal for some days and his little dirty Neice (whom he sent for with a still dirtier Nephew, and hugg'd him, and bid them farewell) told us that unless he dines out he subsists on tea and gruels. And he corroborated this tale by ever and anon complaining of sensations of gnawing which he felt about his *heart*, which he mistook his stomach to be, and sure enough these gnawings were dissipated after a meal or two, and he surely thinks that he has been rescued from the jaws of death by Dr. Dale's white powders. He is got quite well again by nursing, and chirps of odes and lyric poetry the day long—he is to go out of town on Monday, and with him goes the dirty train of his papers and books which follow'd him to our house. I shall not be sorry when he takes his nipt carcase out of my bed, which it has occupied, and vanishes with

all his Lyric lumber, but I will endeavour to bring him in future into a method of dining at least once a day. I have proposed to him to dine with me (and he has nearly come into it) whenever he does not go out; and pay me. I will take his money beforehand and he shall eat it out. If I don't it will go all over the world. Some worthless relations, of which the dirty little devil that looks after him and a still more dirty nephew are component particles, I have reason to think divide all his gains with some lazy worthless authors that are his constant satellites. The Literary Fund has voted him seasonably £20 and if I can help it he shall spend it on his own carcase. I have assisted him in arranging the remainder of what he calls Poems and he will get rid of 'em I hope in another [*Here three lines are torn away at the foot of the page, wherein Lamb makes the transition from George Dyer to another poor author, George Burnett*].

I promised Burnet to write when his parcel went. He wants me to certify that he is more awake than you think him. I believe he may be by this time, but he is so full of self-opinion that I fear whether he and Phillips will ever do together. What he is to do for Phillips he whimsically seems to consider more as a favor done to P. than a job from P. He still persists to call employment *dependence*, and prates about the insolence of booksellers and the tax upon geniuses. Poor devil! he is not launched upon the ocean and is seasick with aforethought. I write plainly about him, and he would stare and frown finely if he read this treacherous epistle, but I really am anxious about him, and that [*? it*] nettles me to see him so proud and so helpless. If he is not serv'd he will never serve himself. I read his long letter to Southey, which I suppose you have seen. He had better have been furnishing copy for Phillips than luxuriating in tracing the causes of his imbecillity. I believe he is a little wrong in not ascribing more to the structure of his own mind. He had his yawns from nature, his pride from education.

I hope to see Southey soon, so I need only send my remembrance to him now. Doubtless I need not tell him that Burnett is not to be foster'd in self-opinion. His eyes want opening, to see himself a man of middling stature. I am not oculist enough to do this. The booksellers may one day remove the film. I am all this time on the most cordial supping terms of amity with

G. Burnett and really love him at times: but I must speak freely of people behind their backs and not think it back-biting. It is better than Godwin's way of telling a man he is a fool to his face.

I think if you could do any thing for George in the way of an office (God knows whether you can in any haste [? case], but you did talk of it) it is my firm belief that it would be his *only chance* of settlement; he will never live by his *literary exertions*, as he calls them—he is too proud to go the usual way to work and he has no talents to make that way unnecessary. I know he talks big in his letter to Southey that his mind is undergoing an alteration and that the die is now casting that shall consign him to honor or dishonour, but these expressions are the convulsions of a fever, not the sober workings of health. Translated into plain English, he now and then perceives he must work or starve, and then he thinks he'll work; but when he goes about it there's a lion in the way. He came dawdling to me for an Encyclopædia yesterday. I recommended him to Norris' library and he said if he could not get it there, Phillips was bound to furnish him with one; it was Phillips' interest to do so, and all that. This was true with some restrictions—but as to Phillips' interests to oblige G. B.! Lord help his simple head! P. could by a *whistle* call together a host of such authors as G. B. like Robin Hood's merry men in green. P. has regular regiments in pay. Poor writers are his crablice and suck at him for nutriment. His round pudding chops are their *idea* of plenty when *in their idle fancies they aspire to be rich*.

What do you think of a life of G. Dyer? I can scarcely conceive a more amusing novel. He has been connected with all sects in the world and he will faithfully tell all he knows. Every body will read it; and if it is not done according to my fancy I promise to put him in a novel when he dies. Nothing shall escape *me*. If you think it feasible, whenever you write you may encourage him. Since he has been so close with me I have perceiv'd the workings of his inordinate vanity, his gigantic attention to particles and to prevent open vowels in his odes, his solicitude that the public may not lose any tittle of his poems by his death, and all the while his utter ignorance that the world don't care a pin about his odes and his criticisms, a fact which every body knows but himself—he *is a rum genius*.

C. L.

[Dr. Dale would probably be Thomas Dale of Devonshire Square, Bishopsgate, who had a large city practice in those days. He died in 1816.

'An old burnt preface.' See note on page 238.

The reference to Southey being in Dublin is explained by the fact that, through Rickman, he had been appointed private secretary to Mr. Corry, Chancellor of the Exchequer for Ireland, at a salary of £400. He did not long retain the post, as it was vexatious and the duties very irregular.

During part of October and November Dyer was being nursed for a fever at Lamb's lodgings and writing to Rickman with the assistance of Lamb as amanuensis. Writing to Dyer on 30th October Rickman says: 'I understand you mean to pay a daily visit to Lamb for some time to establish your health by comfortable social meals—how could you formerly consent to live such a Pelican in a dirty wilderness? I figure to myself much comfort for you—let me see; Lamb dines at three—you arrive at that hour, eat your dinner, and take your pipe and porter afterwards—he sitting by you as your Jester in ordinary all the time. At five you depart to your studies, and leave him to further engagements. You know Lamb has more wit than anybody (except G. Dyer and G. Burnet) and therefore I shall think with envy of your daily happiness. . . . Tell Lamb I observe what he says of Simmonds and that I have a high opinion of Slit-lips—of his ability and integrity—and shall so mention him on occasion. Encourage Lamb to write to me; nothing entertains me so much.']

115. TO JOHN RICKMAN

[No date: 1801.]

I was the moon-struck man, that was inspired to write on the packet 'for John Rickman,' and must hasten to clear Burnett of that part of his *indictment*. He brought to me his Letter and his Essay, or rather two Essays, and desired me to write myself and put up all together in a parcel. I had no leisure to write then, but I did up his things, and when I had done so the enormous bulk staggered me, and I preferred that obnoxious indorsement to enlarging it with another cover. I was guided by the usages of the India House, where I have often received superscriptions similar, and escaped shot-free. I will never practise upon your pocket in the like manner again, but Burnett stands acquitted. None but the Bishop could have composed that illustrious specimen of ignorance which you extract, and he alone, in all England, would not understand the absurdity of it, if it were to be pointed out. Still I wish something could be done for him, even if he waited six weeks, or a day over, for it.

Methinks! (as the Poets say) I see Preferment waiting at the door, *afraid to come in*, 'till his Worship has finished his Introduction, that she may not deprive the World of his matchless labours. I admire your Committation of Pork: it is quite authentic and apostolic. A gift of Tongues. I should sin against the Holy Ghost to refuse it. How, like their clever Ancestors, will they descend in a red shower upon my parched and gaping larder.

I have nothing to communicate, but my thanks. I do assure you that I retain a very lively memory of our old Smoking Evenings in Southampton Buildings. G. Dyer, our illustrious Co-Puffer, has emigrated to Enfield, where some rich man, that has got two Country Houses, allows him the use of a very large one, with a library, where he is getting the final vol. of his Poems ready, and then I shall set him about his Life: by *use* in a sentence back I mean dirting and littering.

Southey is not arrived.

Yours sincerely,

C. L.

I forgot to notice an anachronism in your 1st Letter, which I am glad to see you correct in a subsequent—you accost me my dear Sir. By what twist of association in your unlucky Pericranium have you connected that Honor with my cognomen?

Mary thanks you, but she prefers *Rum*.

I have literally *this moment* recd. your packet for Southey. I mean Burnett's History of his own times. And your letter. For your kind mention of Slit-lips take my warmest thanks. He will have no objection to wait six weeks or *a day over*, tho' it may be damnably more inconvenient for him to *wait*, than for the Bishop. The fact of the 'strange flesh' which he is reported to have eaten, astounds me, but I can believe and tremble.—Never mind the ceremony of franking to me. John Company pays.

116. TO ROBERT LLOYD

[P.M. 18th November 1801.]

I am not dead nor asleep. But Manning is in town, and Coleridge is in town, and I am making a thorough alteration in

the structure of my play for Publication. My brain is overwrought with variety of worldly-intercourse. I have neither time nor mind for scribbling. Who shall deliver me from the body of this Death?

Only continue to write and to believe that when the Hour comes I shall strike like Jack of the Clock, *id est*, I shall once more become a regular correspondent of Robert and Plumstead. How is the benevolent, loud-talking, Shakspeare-loving Brewer?

To your inquiry respecting a selection from Bp. Taylor I answer—it cannot be done, and if it could, it would not *take* with John Bull. It cannot be done, for who can disentangle and unthread the rich texture of Nature and Poetry, sewn so thick into a stout coat of theology, without spoiling both *lace* and *coat*? How beggarly and how bald do even Shakspeare's Princely Pieces look when thus violently divorced from *connection* and *circumstance*! When we meet with 'To be or not to be,' or Jacques' moralisings upon the Deer, or Brutus and Cassius' quarrel and reconciliation—in an Enfield Speaker, or in Elegant Extracts,—how we stare, and will scarcely acknowledge to ourselves (what we are conscious we feel) that they are flat and have no power. Something exactly like this have I experienced when I have picked out similes and stars from 'Holy Dying' and shown them *per se*, as you'd show specimens of minerals or pieces of rock. Compare the grand effect of the star-paved firmament, and imagine a boy capable of picking out those pretty twinklers one by one and playing at chuck-farthing with them. Everything in heaven and earth, in man and in story, in books and in fancy, acts by Confederacy, by juxtaposition, by circumstance and place. Consider a fine family (if I were not writing to you I might instance your own) of sons and daughters, with a respectable father and a handsome mother at their heads, all met in one house, and happy round one table. Earth cannot show a more lovely and venerable sight, such as the Angels in heaven might lament that in their country there is no marrying or giving in marriage. Take and split this Body into individuals—show the separate caprices, vagaries, etc., of Charles, Rob, or Plum, one a Quaker, another a Churchman. The eldest daughter seeking a husband out of the pale of parental faith—another warping, perhaps—the father a prudent, circumspective, do-me-good sort of a man *blest* with

children whom no ordinary rules can circumscribe. I have not room for all particulars—but just as this happy and venerable Body of a family loses by splitting and considering individuals too nicely, so it is when we pick out Best Bits out of a great writer. 'Tis the *sum* total of his mind which affects us.

C. L.

[The Shakespeare-loving Brewer of that time I do not identify.

'Selection from Bp. Taylor.' None the less, Lamb's friend, Basil Montagu, did, some years later, make such a selection, and John Bull bought sufficient copies for it to be called a success.]

117. TO JOHN RICKMAN

[Tuesday, November 24, 1801.]

DR. RICKMAN,

I have just put my finishing hand to my play to alter it for publishing. I have made a thorough change in the structure of the latter part, omitting all those scenes which shew'd John under the first impression of his father's death. I have done this, because I had made him too weak, and to expose himself before his servants, which was an indecorum; and from a theory that poetry has nothing to do to give *pain*; the imbecilities, and deformities, the dotages of human nature, are not fit objects to be shewn. Instead of these rejected scenes I have told his feelings in a *narrative* of the old servant to Margaret, which is a relief to the oppression of John so often *talking* in his own person.—I have cut out all the interview of John and Simon, and they do not meet at all, and I have expunged Simon's bloody resolution, which offended you so much from him. I have sent him to *improve himself* by travel, and it is explained that his presence (who is the *good son* in my *parable*) would have been too much of a reproach and a pain to my *prodigal* in the first hour of his grief.—The whole ends with Margaret's Consolation, where it should end without any pert incident of surprise and trick to make a catastrophe. Moreover, I have excluded the two tales of the Witch and the Gentleman who died for love, having since discovered by searching the parish register of St. Mary Ottery, that his disorder was a strangury, tho' some rimes upon his grave-stone did a little lean

to my hypothesis.—Moreover, I have gone through and cut out all the Ahs! and Ohs! and sundry weak parts, which I thought so fine three or four years ago. When it comes out you must let me know in what manner I can transmit you a copy or two. I have been so particular, because you have shewn more liking to my Margaret than most people, and my alterations were *in part* the offspring of your suggestions; not wholly, for I have long smelt a jumble. I hope you will find it now nearly all of a piece. I am to christen it ‘John Woodvil’ simply—not ‘Pride’s Cure’—as Dyer says, ‘I am no enemy to candid and ingenuous criticism, I only deprecate the arrows of calumny’: *vide* most of the prefaces of G. Dyer. Dyer regularly dines with me when he does not go a visiting and brings his shilling. He has pick’d up amazingly. I never saw him happier. He has had his doors listed and his casements puttied, and bought a handsome *screen* of the last century. Only his poems do not get finished. One volume is printing, but the second wants a good deal doing to it. I do not expect that he will make much progress with his *Life and Opinions*, till his detestable *Lyric Poetry* is delivered to subscribers. I shall make him not deliver one vol. till both are ready, else he would infallibly have made two troubles and two expences of it. He talks of marrying, but this *en passant* (as he says) and *entre nous*, for God’s sake don’t mention it to him, for he has not forgiven me for betraying to you his purpose of writing his own *Life*. He says that if it once spreads, so many people will expect and wish to have a place in it, that he is sure he shall disoblige all his friends.

G. Burnett shewed me your rousing Letter. If I had not known your theory and design, I must have called it a very cruel Letter, and sure as I was that your general idea of the treatment, which is best for Burnetts and George the Seconds, was right, I could not help thinking you had gone too far, even so far that he could not put up with it or you ever after, without doing a moral injury to himself. But you must pursue your own course, which 9 times out of ten will be more judicious than mine. The less of interference in these cases, the better. I was principally (if not only) sorry, that you assured him of Southey’s opinion of the mediocrity of his understanding perfectly agreeing with your own. Southey was the last plank of the scaffold which

propt up George in his opinion of himself. But I dare not affirm you did wrong. I am not a teacher in Israel. Yours truly,

C. LAMB.

John Rickman, Esq.,
Dublin Castle.

118. TO JOHN RICKMAN

[No date or postmark: 1801.]

I sincerely thank you for your repeated offer, but I have just received as much as £50, an old debt which I told you of, and that will a good deal and more than cover the expences of printing. I expect to be able to send you some copies in a few weeks. I have not had a proof sheet yet. I have nothing to claim upon Dyer's account. He paid me from the beginning as near as I can calculate, and I solemnly protest it, to a penny for all the expences he put me to, and whenever he dines with us he regularly brings his shilling, which is a fair average for what his gluttony devours. To be sure he has occasionally an eleemosynary whiff of tobacco, for which I cannot sconse the Poet. [*5 lines erased.*] I am afraid he sometimes does not come when he has not got a shilling. I cannot force him, for now his health is come back, he is the most unmanageable of God's creatures. He goes about fetching and carrying for Ladies, and always thinking he *must* call upon this Lady and t'other Gentleman. His first vol. is nearly printed, but he is projecting new odes and impertinences for the 2d, and I cannot foresee a period. Still he seems by fits bent upon writing his Life, and will do it if the Prototype is not overtaken with death. I quite give up any hope of reducing him to common sense and human conduct. All that can be done is to bolster up his carcase by a daily habit of Dining, until he finishes his mortal pilgrimage. Poor G. Burnett is very ill and reduced. You would deposit your fierce anger if you saw the metaphysician. He has brought his Introduction to a finish at last, but he is not in a capacity to go on. Coleridge has recommended him to the Editor of the *Morning Post*, who has promised to employ him. But a Lion is in his foot-path, and he cannot *begin yet*. I suppose

he will write to you, and it will be needless to say more of him here. The goul has a gouless and two, if not three young gouls. The goul has not paid me the pittance, for 'twas not much, he borrowed of me, but I have reason to believe his circumstances are so squalid, that it would be more to expect of him than can be expected from man or goul, to divert his Comings in from the service of genuine hunger and thirst.—Fenwick's *Plough* (how one idea of Poverty introduces another!) is degenerated already from a daily to a weekly paper. I wish it may not vanish into thin air, or come out the same day as Burnett's *Historia Romana* issues from the press. I meantime have made some overtures to the Editor of the *Morning Post* thro' Coleridge, who writes for that paper, and hope I am on the point of being engaged.—I have seen Southey several times. His wife is considerably improved, and will talk if she is talked to, but she bitterly complains that when literary men get together, they never speak to the women. Mrs. Lovel is also in town and Southey's mother, who is DYING:—'So am not I, said the foolish fat scullion.' Do you remember our unfeeling behaviour at the funeral of that dear young Lady, who was withered in her bloom by the untimely stroke of Death, and lies in what-d'y-e-call-'em Church yard? The tear is falling while I remember—don't you perceive the Ink is rather *brackish*? as G. Burnett asked in a company at my brother's the other day, whether the Thames Water at Blackfriars Bridge was not a little Brackish.—The Professor has not yet thrown himself away. I am sorry to find he is about to commit a folly. for I hear that She has no fortune and has one child, and they propose that she shall ease the burden of the family expences by translating from the French.—Fell, the inevitable shadow of everything which Godwin does, is absolutely writing a Play. It is a Comedy. It is just finished, and I go this evening in the hope to see it. It will have one trait in it. There can be no mirth in it. An Owl making a Pun would be no bad emblem of the unnatural attempt. To your enquiry whether Mary swallows certain mixed Liquors, she answers that I unfortunately misunderstood that advice, as if it had been address to me, and have almost killed myself by the Blunder. But she will profit by the correction. She desires her love and remembrance. White often enquires after you, and as often desires to be mentioned to you, which I as regularly forget.

Stoddart is going to begin the study of Civil Law at the Commons.
Farewell, old Comrade and new Secretary.

Thine,

C. L.

You must send up your St. Helena letter *immediately*, and I will drop it in our Box. I can't frank it, John Company never franks *outwards*. A ship, the *Marquis of Ely*, goes at Xmas. The *Armston* goes next Wednesday.

Since I wrote last Leaf, I have read Fell's Comedy, and am surprized to find it contain, if not sterling wit or character, a liveliness and knowledge of the present popular taste, which has astonish'd me. The serious parts are damn'd flat. But I should not at all wonder, he having a pretty good introduction, even if it should please highly. He has been a minute observer of what *takes* in Reynolds's plays, and has had real actors continually in his view.—Who knows, but Owls *do* make Puns, when they hoot by moonshine? I shall hear from the *Morning Post* this day, and shall endeavour to get the Theatrical Reports, not *all*, but Kemble's chief characters, and Cooke's, etc.

[James Fenwick's latest journalistic venture seems to have been called the *Plough*. We learn later that the Duke of Northumberland was one of his backers.

Ralph Fell was the author of a *Tour through the Batavian Republic*, 1801. Later he compiled a *Life of Charles James Fox*, 1808. Lamb knew him, as well as Fenwick, through Godwin. His farce I have not identified. Why he is called an owl I cannot say. The dramatist whom he followed was Frederic Reynolds (1764–1841).

'So am not I' is from *Tristram Shandy*, Part V, Chapter VII.]

119. TO JOHN RICKMAN

January 9, 1802.

Please to send me *one* Letter with the *Broad Seal*, for a friend who is curious in impressions.

I am to be sure much gratified with your use of Margaret as a kind of rack to extract confession from women. But don't give me out as your Rack-maker, lest the women retort upon me the fate of Perillus, which you may read in your Ainsworth under the article Phalaris; or you may find the story more at large by

perusing the Controversy between Bentley and Boyle. I have delayed to write (I believe I am telling a Lye) until I should get a book ready to send (but I believe this has been all along a pretext recurred to, a kind of after-motive, when the resolution was taken a priori, rather than the true cause, which was mixed up of busy days and riotous nights, doing the Company's business in a morning, straining for Jokes in the afternoon, and retailing them (not being yet published) over punch at night. The Lungs of Stentor could not long sustain the Life I have led. I get into parties, or treat them with Pope Joan four times in a week. You have dropt in ere now when Norris was courting at such a Party, and you know the game. I stick to it like any *Papist*. 'Tis better than Poetry, Mechanics, Politics, or Metaphysics. That's a stop—there's pope—you did not take your ace—what a magic charm in sounds. I begin not to wonder at the bloodshed which dyed Christian Europe concerning Omousia and Omoiousia.—A party of people's *faces* about a fire grinning over cards and forgetting that they have got to go home is the supreme felicity, the Maximum Bonum. White has or is about to write you at my suggestion. We desire nothing so vigorously as to see Master Secretary in these parts. There are Liquors and fumes extant, which have power to detain a Bachelor from his cold Bed till cock crow.

Fenwick gives routs and balls and suppers (not balls) but splendid entertainments out of the first fruits of the *Plow*—he had some hundreds of pounds from unthinking Nobility. It is no breach of charity to suppose that part is expended—his wife and daughter have got magnificent Hats, which Mary waggishly has christen'd Northumberland Hats, from his great Patron at Charing Cross.

Dyer has at last met with a madman more mad than himself—the Earl of Buchan, brother to the Erskines and eccentric biographer of Fletcher of Saltoun. This old man of near eighty is come to London in his way to France, and George and he go about everywhere. George brought the mad Lord up to see me—I wan't at home but Mary was washing—a pretty pickle to receive an Earl in! Lord have mercy upon us! a Lord in my garret! My utmost ambition was some time or other to receive a Secretary! Well, I am to breakfast with this mad Lord on Sunday. I am

studying manners. George and my Lord of Buchan went on Thursday last to Richmond in the Long Coach to pay their devotions to the shrine of Thomson! The coldest day in the year. Enough to cool a Jerusalem-Padder. George is as proud as a Turkey Cock and can talk of nothing else; always taking care to hedge in at the end that he don't value Lords, and that the Earl has nothing of the Lord about him. O human nature! human Nature! for my part I have told every Body, how I had an Earl come to see me. George describes the Earl as a very worthy man, who has his hobby horses; for instance, George says, he will stop you in the street, when you are walking with him, and hold you by the button, and talk so loud, that all the Passers by look at you. So you may guess *why* he cleaves to George the first. If you have read the *Post*, you may have seen a dissertation on Cooke's Richard the 3d. which is the best thing I have done. It was in last Monday; stray Jokes I will not *mark*, hoping you will always take the good ones to be mine, and the bad ones to be done by John a Nokes, etc.

In haste. Happy New Year to Master Secretary.

C. L.

I had, before your injunction came, given a hint to the Goul, that you were disposed to serve him; this to rear him from the dreary state of despair he was in. But now, *mum*. I wish to God you may do any thing: for all the Elements have fought against him.

My play will most likely accompany my *next*. Fell's goes on slow and sure, like his own long stories. It is *much, much*, better than I could believe. Some of it is very good *farce*, which is all a modern play need be.

[This very allusive letter contains one remark which bears upon Lamb's office hours and recalls a famous story. He says that he does Company's work in the morning and makes jokes for the newspapers in the afternoon. 'How late you come, Mr. Lamb!' said one of his India House superiors. 'Yes, but you should see how early I go,' was the reply.

'Your Ainsworth.' Robert Ainsworth's *Latin-English Dictionary*.

'Pope Joan.' This game has become obsolete, but survives to some extent in the form of Newmarket.

'Omousia' and 'Omoiousia.' The words refer to a dispute between the orthodox and Arian heretics of the fourth century as to the substance of the Father and the Son.

The Duke of Northumberland from whom Fenwick seems to have extracted the sinews of war was the second (1742-1817), who had been in command of the British forces in America, and was now flirting with politics, but could not work either with Pitt or Fox. Fenwick's career, as we shall see, was very near the end.

Dyer's Earl of Buchan was not so old as Lamb thought, being in 1802 only sixty. It was he who, later, gave Sir Walter Scott the sepulchral aisle of Dryburgh Abbey as a burial-place and plagued him with premature funeral courtesies when he was ill in bed. On the title-page of the *Duke's Essays*, 1812, is a vignette of his 'Temple of the Muses erected at Dryburgh Abbey to the memory of Thomson and Burns,' a model of which may have been at Richmond.

Rickman was now lodged at Dublin Castle as Deputy Keeper of the Privy Seal under the Chief Secretary.]

120. TO JOHN RICKMAN

January 14, 1802.

You may suspect as much as you please (suspicion ever haunts the guilty mind) that I did not do that thing about Richard, but I tell you I did, and I also made the Lord Mayor's Bed, which you are welcome to rumple as much as you please. I plead guilty to certain 'felicities of phrase'—*Noviciate* used as an adjective I myself suspected, but did not know that *novice* was any other than a substantive. But what the devil's all this coil for about delightful artifices and elastic minds? and how should a man at Bantry Bay know any thing about good English? the fact is, that it was but an unfinished affair at first, and by the *intelligent artifice* of the Editor it was made more chaotic still. As it stands, it is more than half *introduction*: half of which was to be *note*. But it is most probably the last theatrical morceau I shall do: for they want 'em done the same night, and I tried it once, and found myself non compos. I can't *do* a thing against time. If I use 'do' and 'did' to excess, 'tis because I know 'em to be good English, that you can't deny. My Editor uniformly rejects all that I do considerable in length. I shall only do paragraphs, with now and then a slight poem such as 'Dick Strype,' if you read it, which was but a long Epigram. So I beg you not to read with much expectation, for my poor paragraphs do only get in, when there are none of any body's else. Most of them are rejected; all, almost, that are *personal*, where my forte lies. And

I cannot get at once out of the delightful regions of scurrility, the 'Delectable Mountains' of *Albion* where whilom I fed my sheep, into the kickshaws of fashionable tittle-tattle, which I *must learn*. I cannot have the conscience to order a Paper for Xt Church, on the hypothesis that it is on my account (which is modest) for no paragraphs can be worth eight guineas a year. However I will try and see, if I can get it at an under price as you proposed.—I sent 'em Mottoes for 12th Day at their own desire—how did they serve me? the first day they put in mottoes by another (most stupid) hand, and the next day mottoes by ditto with some of mine tacked to 'em. They rejected a pretty good one on Dr. Solomon.

My namesake, sprung from Jewish Breeder,
Knew *from* the Hyssop to the Cedar,
But I, unlike the Jewish Leader,
Scarce know the Hyssop *from* the Cedar.

Another of the rejected ones, on Count Rumford—

I deal in Aliments fictitious,
And tease the Poor with soups nutritious;
Of bones and flint I make dilution,
And belong to the National Institution.

Maybe you didn't see what were *in* of mine. The Best was

ADDINGTON

I put my night cap on my head,
And went as usual to my bed,
And most surprising to relate!
I woke a Minister of State!

Another

FRERE AND CANNING

At Eton School brought up with dull boys,
We shone like *men* among the *school boys*;
But since we in the world have been
We are but *schoolboys* among men.

Your advice about getting a share of the *Post as fast as I can!!* I shall certainly follow. I wish I may hold my two guinea matter.

My scrawl costs you nothing; and me only so much Ink. Mary's Love. We are just setting out on a night expedition freezing (the glass at 23 as I *bear*, for I don't know a thermometer

from a barometer) to Pentonville to see Mister Comedy Fell and his pretty spouse.

Yours etc.

C. L.

[The 'thing about Richard' was the dramatic criticism of G. F. Cooke which appeared in the *Morning Post* of 8th July 1802. (See my edition of Lamb's *Works*.)

The fantasy on the Lord Mayor's Bed ran thus (*Morning Post*, 4th January 1802):

THE FASHIONABLE WORLD

Ever since an account of the Marquis of Exeter's Grand State Bed appeared in the fashionable world, grandeur in this article of furniture has become quite the rage. Among others, the Lord Mayor, feeling for the dignity of the city of London, has petitioned the Corporation for one of great splendour to be placed in the Mansion House, *at the city's expence*.

We have been favoured with a description of this magnificent state bed, the choice of his Lordship. The body is formed by the callipee, or under-shell of a large turtle, carved in mahogany, and sufficiently capacious to receive two well-fed people. The callipash, or upper shell, forms the canopy. The posts are four gigantic figures richly gilt: two of them accurate copies of Gog and Magog. The other two represent Sir William Walworth and the last man in armour. Cupids with custards are their supporters. The curtains are of mazarine purple, and curiously wrought with the series of the idle and the industrious apprentice from Hogarth in gold embroidery; but the vallens exceed description; *there*, the various incidents in the life of Whittington are painted. The mice in one of the compartments are done so much to the life, that his Lordship's cat, which is an accurate judge of mice, was deceived. The quilt is of fashionable patchwork figures, the description of which we shall not anticipate, as we understand Mr. Birch has obtained a sketch of it for his large Twelfth-Cake. The whole is worthy of the taste of the first Magistrate of the first City in the World.

And here is *Dick Strype* (*Morning Post*, 6th January 1802):

DICK STRYPE OR, THE FORCE OF HABIT

A TALE—BY TIMOTHY BRAMBLE

Habits are *stubborn things* :

And by the time a man is turn'd of forty

His *ruling passion's* grown so haughty

There is no clipping of its wings.

The amorous roots have taken earth, and fix:

And never shall P—TT leave his juggling tricks,

Till H—Y quits his metre with his pride,

Till w—M learns to flatter regicide,

Till hypocrite enthusiasts cease to rant

And *Mister W*—*E* leaves off to cant.
 The truth will best be shewn,
 By a familiar instance of our own.

DICK STRYPE

Was a dear friend and lover of the *pipe* ;
 He us'd to say, *one pipe of Kirkman's best*
 Gave life a *zest*.

To him 'twas meat, and drink, and physic,
 To see the friendly vapour
 Curl round his midnight taper,
 And the black fume
 Clothe the room,

In clouds as dark as *science metaphysic*.

So still he smok'd, and drank, and crack'd his joke;

And, had he *single* tarried

He might have smok'd, and still grown old in smoke:

But RICHARD married.

His wife was one who carried
 The *cleanly virtues* almost to a vice,
 She was so *nice*:

And thrice a week, above, below,

The house was scour'd from top to toe,

And all the floors were rubb'd so bright,

You dar'd not walk upright

For fear of sliding:

But that she took a pride in.

Of all things else REBECCA STRYPE

Could least endure a *pipe*.

She rail'd upon the filthy herb tobacco,

Protested that the noisome vapour

Had spoil'd the best chintz curtains and the paper,

And cost her many a pound in stucco:

And then, she quoted our *King James*, who saith,

'Tobacco is the Devil's breath.'

When wives *will* govern, husbands *must* obey:

For many a day

DICK mourn'd and miss'd his favourite tobacco

And curs'd REBECCA.

At length the day approach'd, his wife must die:

Imagine now the doleful cry

Of female friends, old aunts, and cousins,

Who to the fun'ral came by dozens.

The undertaker's men and mutes

Stood at the gate in sable suits,

With doleful looks,

Just like so many melancholy *rooks*.

Now cakes and wine are handed round,
 Folks sigh, and drink, and drink, and sigh,
 For Grief makes people *dry*:
 But DICK is *missing*, no where to be found.
 Above, below, about
 They search'd the house throughout,
 Each hole and secret entry,
 Quite from the garret to the pantry,
 In ev'ry corner, cupboard, nook and shelf,
 And all concluded he had hang'd himself.
 At last they found him—reader, guess you where—
 'Twill make you stare—
 Perch'd on REBECCA'S *Coffin*, at his rest,
 SMOKING A PIPE OF KIRKMAN'S BEST.

I think that the similarity of the ending of these verses and the story called *Ephraim Wagstaff, his wife, and his Pipe*, in Hone's *Table Talk*, signed 'Nemo,' may be taken as corroboration of Dykes Campbell's theory that Lamb was the author of that too.

The missing names at the beginning: William Pitt, William Hayley, William Wickham, William Wilberforce. If, however, the word in line 7 is not 'metre' but 'mitre,' then the name would be Hervey, Bishop of Derry.

As to the rejected Epigrams, Solomon was a notorious quack, and Count Rumford was Benjamin Thompson (1753-1814), who, an American by birth, acquired a European reputation as a scientific investigator, and was the founder of the Royal Institution. He was best known by the invention of the Rumford stove. In addition to receiving an English knighthood he was made a count by the Elector of Bavaria.]

121. TO JOHN RICKMAN

January 18, 1802.

George the 2nd has just arrived, has stayed over his time!! and written to Ld. Stanhope without telling his Ld.ship where to find him, accordingly must write again.

Dear Rickman—I have not been able to find a chapman, who will pay half thy father's newspapers. I already read the *Post* upon nearly a similar Plan; 7 or 8 of us subscribe. One keeps it and pays 1/2. But to avert thy wrath and indignation which I know will burn most furiously if I omit thy commission, I have ordered one at full cost, and there will go the first with the same Post which carries this. As Mary seldom sees a Paper she will

thank your father for the liberty of reading it first, and take care only to send it by the same day's Post. She will pay such proportion as a Jury before Lord Kenyon shall award.

Dinner is smoking.

Yours truly,

C. LAMB.

To John Rickman, Esq.,
Dublin Castle.

122. TO JOHN RICKMAN

February 1, 1802.

DEAR RICKMAN,

Not having known the sweet girl deceased, your humble servant cannot endite with true passion a suitable Epitaph. Here is a kind of substitute for feeling—but your own Prose, or nakedly the Letter which you sent me, which was in some sort an Epitaph, and the best one, would do better on her grave stone than the cold Lines of a Stranger.

A Heart which felt Unkindness, yet complain'd not;
A Tongue which spake the simple Truth, and feign'd not;
A Soul as white as the pure marble Skin
(The beauteous Mansion it was lodg'd in)
Which, unrespected, could itself respect:
On Earth was all the Portion of a Maid,
Who in this common Sanctuary laid
Sleeps unoffended by the World's Neglect.

I have not seen Southey to talk with him about it, but I conclude you address a Letter to that import to him, as *his* came along with mine.—If you stay a little, perhaps he or I may hit upon a Better, for I suspect it sadly of common place.

I had hoped ere this to send you a Book, but the Boarders are shockingly dilatory, and seem never to have heard of the fabulous stories of the Anxiety of Authors and Parents.

You will see almost as soon as the Receipt of this a first Number of a Paper in the *Morning Post*, which I have undertaken solus, to be called the *Londoner*; I think you will like the First Number, as it jumps with your Notions about a Country Life, etc. I have done no more, so I have all the world before me where to chuse. I think you could give me hints. I have seen light

Papers in the *Agricult. Mag.* which would suit the *Londoner* to a tittle. G. Burnett surprized us with a visit yesterday. His Two young Lords have run away—George deposes, that he was Teaching them their Lesson, when he was called down by Ld. Stanhope to be introduced to his Lordship's Mother; when he returned his Pupils were flown. They had gone out of Window with their best Coats and Linen.—The Eldest Son of Ld. S. served him exactly the same Trick, and his Lordship sets it down, that these Striplings as well as the former (who never came back) were spirited away by the Pitt and Grenville Party, to whom he is allied by marriage. He says, that Pitt will make them Villains. Ministers have already bought off his Son and his Son-in-Law: and he meant to bring up these young ones (the eldest 16) to mechanics or manufactures. It is very probable what he says—for the P's and G's (writing to a Secretary I dare not be more explicit) would go some steps to stop the growth of Democratic Peers.—George declares that he is only sorry on Ld. Stanhope's account, who is much agitated, but on his own he don't care at all: nay I have no doubt he is ready to leap at his heart, for Lord S. desires he will stay in his house, and he will try to get him something. So George has got his old desirable prospect of food and clothing with no Duty to perform for it. I could fill vols. with a History of his absurdities since the date of my Last. . . . Take one or 2.—Imprimis, he overstay'd his 3 weeks—then he wrote to Lord S. from town to write to him, but forgot to mention his own address—then he was forced to write again to say he forgot, and begg'd his Lordship to tell him the Exact situation where his Lordship's House stood, that he might have no trouble in finding it!!! to write to a Peer of the Realm to tell the number of his house! Then he determines to set off for Chevening next morning, and writes that he will come down by the 3 o'clock stage—then he comes to us the night before at 11 and complains bitterly of the difficulty of getting up so early—then he goes away, and White and I lay wagers that he won't go at all. Next morning 11 o'clock—enter Geo. the 2nd in a dirty neckcloth—he could not go because he had no Linen, and he had not time to go to Southey and borrow it, and inadvertently slips out that to be sure there was a Coach went at $\frac{1}{2}$ past 10. Then my Tutor gapes, and stares, and borrows a neckcloth and sets

off with all proper humility to My Lord's in a Post Chaise—drives up to the Door in Style—and there I leave him bowing and gaping to see the fine Pictures.

Yours truly,

C. LAMB.

Mary's grateful thanks for your indulgence by which she reads my works.

['The Epitaph.' This was one version of Lamb's inscriptions for the grave of Mary Drutt. Later we shall find the perfected form.

'All the world before me.' From the last lines of *Paradise Lost*.

George Burnett's charges were Philip, who became the fourth Earl, Charles Banks Stanhope, who was killed at Corunna in 1809, and James Hamilton Stanhope, also a soldier, who survived until 1825.]

123. TO JOHN RICKMAN

February 4, 1802.

DEAR RICKMAN,

I send you three Copies. Keep one yourself, and distribute the others. Perhaps you will send one to her, 'whom you in sport do call your Margaret,' but this is mere conjecture.

G. Dyer is sitting by me, he begs to be kindly remembered. He has brought news, that a Mr. Wainewright, with a Mr. Frend the Pamphleteer, and Mr. Perry the Chronicleer, have set up as a Committee to procure him an annuity by subscription. Ld. Stanhope has sent £50.

Talking of money, you owe me £22—which I paid in advance for your father's Papers.

Yours truly,

C. L.

To John Rickman, Esq.,
Dublin Castle.

['Whom you in sport.' A synthetic memory of *John Woodvil*, I think.]

124. TO JOHN RICKMAN

February 14, 1802.

'I take thy groat in earnest of Revenge.' One-and-twenty Margarets fall to the disposal of your dainty Cousin. I hope he

won't debauch them. I sup with him at Southey's on Tuesday, God willing.—Your guineas (which, let me tell you, are too much, but you shall have your way) are not absolutely mal-a-pros, for by a cruel reverse of Fortune, that Dame who is painted with a wheel to signify to you that she is changes, and rollings, and mutabilities, I am no longer Paragraph spinner. The fact is, that Stuart was wonderfully polite and civil at first, I suppose because Coleridge recommended me, from whose assistance in the Paper he expected great things, but Coleridge from ill health and unsettlement having hung an Arse, as the saying is, I gradually got out of favor, and Stuart has at last twice told me that I must take more pains about my paragraphs, for he has not been able to draw above one in five from what I have sent him. This in connection with his altered behaviour was hint quite enough for me, who do not require hints as big as St. Paul's Church to make me understand a coldness, excited my magnanimous spirit to endite a valorous Letter of Resignation, which I did with some qualms, when I remembered what I gave up: but to tell truth, all the little I have done has been very irksome, and rendered ten times more so from a sense of my employer not being fully satisfied: and that little has subtracted from my pleasure of walking, reading, idling, etc., which are as necessary to me as the 'golden vapour' of Life itself. My health (silly as it seems to relate) has suffered bitterly. The Routine has been drinking one night in noisy company and writing the next upon a head ach. My Spirits absolutely require freedom and leisure, and I think I shall never engage to do task work any more, for I am sick.—I must cut closer, but better is something (I forget what, but it is scriptural) than a stalled ox, &c. I am almost ashamed at my capriciousness, as must seem to you, but upon a serious review I do approve of what I've done. I've foolishly involved you, I fear in an expense of 8 guineas a year, which I *think* was on my acct. but as it is for *whom* it is, I must not call it foolish. A Paper in a Country Town is a kind of London. But I would gladly purchase your acquiescence by paying half, which I know you won't accept. I have given this up only two days, and I feel myself at elbow room, free and happy. I can scribble now at my heart's Leisure, if I have an impulse, and tho' I know I speak as a fool, I am sure I can write better gratis. Give me one curse

and then for God's sake say no more about it. I have weighed my loss and my gain, and I write *Profit*.

I may yet do the *Londoners* at my Leisure.

This Letter is short for I have got a bad headache. Mr. Abbot's elevation, you may be sure, surprized me. I take it for granted you will not be a Loser. I am sure I shall be a gainer, if an Easterly wind wafts you to England.

Freud was here yesterday. He desires me to set down every day Dyer dines with me, and the Committee will pay me, as George is to have no money of his own. George contrives constantly to dine here, when he says he shan't over night, which is very *convenient*, and vice versa. It is the damned Vanity of being supposed to be always engaged. Now he is got well, he is as freakish as King David at Gath. Nothing can be done with him; save that the Committee will preserve him from *felo de se*, that he shan't starve himself.

George the 2nd discharges his important Trust, of doing *nothing* for Ld. S. with fidelity and diligence. His Lordship sends him to town upon any fiddle-faddle errand, and George fancies himself essential to his Lordship's comfort. He looks more important than Mr. Dressin, King's messenger.

Mary always desires to be most kindly remembered by you. She bids me *not* tell you that an Epigram called *Helen*, in my little Book, is of her writing. But it is, every tittle of it. I hope you do not dislike it.

We remain yours truly

C. L., M. L.

[On the 10th February the Right Hon. Charles Abbot, afterwards Lord Colchester, was elected Speaker to the House of Commons in the room of the Right Hon. John Nutford, who had accepted the position of Chancellor of Ireland.

We have seen Mary Lamb's epigram, in the letter to Coleridge of 26th August 1800.

In 1838 Stuart was drawn into a correspondence with Henry Coleridge in the *Gentleman's Magazine* (May, June, July, and August) concerning some statements about Coleridge's connection with the *Morning Post* and *The Courier* which were made in Gillman's *Life*. Stuart, in the course of straightening out his relations with Coleridge, referred thus to Lamb:

But as for good Charles Lamb, I never could make any-thing of his writings. Coleridge often and repeatedly pressed me to settle him on a

salary, and often and repeatedly did I try; but it would not do. Of politics he knew nothing; they were out of his line of reading, and thought; and his drollery was vapid, when given in short paragraphs fit for a newspaper: yet he has produced some agreeable books, possessing a tone of humour and kind feeling, in a quaint style, which it is amusing to read, and cheering to remember.]

125. TO THOMAS MANNING

[Dated at end: 15th February 1802.]

Not a sentence, not a syllable of Trismegistus, shall be lost through my neglect. I am his word-banker, his storekeeper of puns and syllogisms. You cannot conceive (and if Trismegistus cannot, no man can) the strange joy which I felt at the receipt of a letter from Paris. It seemed to give me a learned importance, which placed me above all who had not Parisian correspondents. Believe that I shall carefully husband every scrap, which will save you the trouble of memory, when you come back. You cannot write things so trifling, let them only be about Paris, which I shall not treasure. In particular, I must have parallels of actors and actresses. I must be told if any building in Paris is at all comparable to St. Paul's, which, contrary to the usual mode of that part of our nature called admiration, I have looked up to with unfading wonder every morning at ten o'clock, ever since it has lain in my way to business. At noon I casually glance upon it, being hungry; and hunger has not much taste for the fine arts. Is any night-walk comparable to a walk from St. Paul's to Charing Cross, for lighting and paving, crowds going and coming without respite, the rattle of coaches and the cheerfulness of shops? Have you seen a man guillotined yet? is it as good as hanging? are the women *all* painted, and the men *all* monkeys? or are there not a *few* that look like *rational* of *both sexes*? Are you and the First Consul *thick*? All this expense of ink I may fairly put you to, as your letters will not be solely for my proper pleasure, but are to serve as memoranda and notices, helps for short memory, a kind of Rumfordising recollection, for yourself on your return. Your letter was just what a letter should be, crammed and very funny. Every part of it pleased me till you

came to Paris; and your damn'd philosophical indolence or indifference stung me. You cannot stir from your rooms till you know the language! What the devil!—are men nothing but word-trumpets? are men all tongue and ear? have these creatures, that you and I profess to know *something about*, no faces, gestures, gabble: no folly, no absurdity, no induction of French education upon the abstract idea of men and women, no similitude nor dissimilitude to English! Why! thou damn'd Smell-fungus! your account of your landing and reception, and Bullen (I forget how you spell it—it was spelt my way in Harry the Eighth's time,) was exactly in that minute style which strong impressions INSPIRE (writing to a Frenchman, I write as a Frenchman would). It appears to me as if I should die with joy at the first landing in a foreign country. It is the nearest pleasure, which a grown man can substitute for that unknown one, which he can never know—the pleasure of the first entrance into life from the womb. I dare say, in a short time, my habits would come back like a 'stronger man' armed, and drive out that new pleasure; and I should soon sicken for known objects. Nothing has transpired here that seems to me of sufficient importance to send dry-shod over the water: but I suppose you will want to be told some news. The best and the worst to me is, that I have given up two guineas a week at the 'Post,' and regained my health and spirits, which were upon the wane. I grew sick, and Stuart unsatisfied. *Ludisti satis, tempus abire est*; I must cut closer, that's all.

In all this time I have done but one thing, which I reckon tolerable, and that I will transcribe, because it may give you pleasure, being a picture of *my* humours. You will find it in my last page. It absurdly is a first Number of a series, thus strangled in its birth.

More news! The Professor's Rib has come out to be a damn'd disagreeable woman, so much so as to drive me and some more old cronies from his house. If a man will keep snakes in his house, he must not wonder if people are shy of coming to see him because of the *snakes*.

Mister Fell—or as you, with your usual facetiousness and drollery, call him, Mr. F+ll—has stopped short in the middle of his play. Some *friend* has told him that it has not the least merit in it. Oh! that I had the rectifying of the Litany! I

would put in a *libera nos* (*Scriptores videlicet*) *ab amicis* ! That's all the news. *A propos* (is it pedantry, writing to a Frenchman, to express myself sometimes by a French word, when an English one would not do as well? methinks, my thoughts fall naturally into it).—

Apropos, I think you wrong about my play. All the omissions are right. And the supplementary scene, in which Sandford narrates the manner in which his master is affected, is the best in the book. It stands where a hodge-podge of German puerilities used to stand. I insist upon it that you like that scene. Love me, love that scene.

I will now transcribe the 'Londoner' (No. 1), and wind up all with affection and humble servant at the end. I write small in regard to your good eyesight.

THE LONDONER. NO. 1

In compliance with my own particular humour, no less than with thy laudable curiosity, Reader, I proceed to give thee some account of my history and habits. I was born under the nose of St. Dunstan's steeple, just where the conflux of the eastern and western inhabitants of this twofold city meet and jostle in friendly opposition at Temple-bar. The same day which gave me to the world saw London happy in the celebration of her great annual feast. This I cannot help looking upon as a lively type or omen of the future great goodwill which I was destined to bear toward the City, resembling in kind that solicitude which every Chief Magistrate is supposed to feel for whatever concerns her interests and well-being. Indeed, I consider myself in some sort a speculative Lord Mayor of London: for, though circumstances unhappily preclude me from the hope of ever arriving at the dignity of a gold chain and spital sermon, yet thus much will I say of myself, in truth, that *Whittington* himself with his *Cat* (just emblem of *vigilance* and a *furred gown*), never went beyond me in affection, which I bear to the citizens. Shut out from serving them in the most honourable mode, I aspire to do them benefit in another, scarcely less honourable; and if I cannot, by virtue of office, commit vice and irregularity to the *material Counter*, I will, at least, erect a *spiritual one*, where they shall be

laid fast by the beels. In plain words, I will do my best endeavour to *write them down.*

To return to *myself* (from whence my zeal for the Public good is perpetually causing me to digress), I will let thee, Reader, into certain more of my peculiarities. I was born (as you have heard), bred, and have passed most of my time, in a *crowd*. This has begot in me an entire affection for that way of life, amounting to an almost insurmountable aversion from solitude and rural scenes. This aversion was never interrupted or suspended, except for a few years in the younger part of my life, during a period in which I had fixed my affections upon a charming young woman. Every man, while the *passion* is upon him, is for a time at least addicted to groves and meadows, and purling streams. During this short period of my existence, I contracted just enough familiarity with rural objects to understand tolerably well ever after the *Poets*, when they declaim in such passionate terms in favour of a *country life*.

For my own part, now the *fit* is long past, I have no hesitation in declaring, that a mob of happy faces crowding up at the pit door of Drury-Lane Theatre just at the hour of five, give me ten thousand finer pleasures, than I ever received from all the flocks of *silly sheep*, that have whitened the plains of *Arcadia* or *Epsom Downs*.

This passion for crowds is no where feasted so full as in London. The man must have a rare *recipe* for melancholy, who can be dull in Fleet-street. I am naturally inclined to *hypochondria*, but in London it vanishes, like all other ills. Often when I have felt a weariness or distaste at home, have I rushed out into her crowded Strand, and fed my humour, till tears have wetted my cheek for inutterable sympathies with the multitudinous moving picture, which she never fails to present at all hours, like the shifting scenes of a skilful Pantomime.

The very deformities of London, which give distaste to others, from habit do not displease me. The endless succession of shops, where Fancy (miscalled Folly) is supplied with perpetual new gauds and toys, excite in me no puritanical aversion. I gladly behold every appetite supplied with its proper food. The obliging customer, and the obliged tradesmen—things which live by bowing, and things which exist but for homage, do not affect

me with disgust; from habit I perceive nothing but urbanity, where other men, more refined, discover meanness. I love the very smoke of London, because it has been the medium most familiar to my vision. I see grand principles of honour at work in the dirty ring which encompasses two combatants with fists, and principles of no less eternal justice in the tumultuous detectors of a pickpocket. The salutary astonishment with which an execution is surveyed, convinces me more forcibly than an hundred volumes of abstract polity, that the universal instinct of man, in all ages, has leaned to order and good government. Thus an art of extracting morality, from the commonest incidents of a town life, is attained by the same well-natured alchemy, with which the *Foresters of Arden* in a beautiful country

Found tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,
Sermons in stones, and good in every thing—

Where has spleen her food but in London—humour, interest, curiosity, suck at her measureless breasts without a possibility of being satiated. Nursed amid her noise, her crowds, her beloved smoke—what have I been doing all my life, if I have not lent out my heart with usury to such scenes?

Reader, in the course of my peregrinations about the great city, it is hard, if I have not picked up matter, which may serve to amuse thee, as it has done me, a winter evening long. When next we meet, I purpose opening my budget—Till when, farewell.

‘What is all this about?’ said Mrs. Shandy. ‘A story of a cock and a bull,’ said Yorick: and so it is; but Manning will take good-naturedly what *God will send him* across the water: only I hope he won’t *shut his eyes*, and *open his mouth*, as the children say, for that is the way to *gape*, and not to *read*. Manning, continue your laudable purpose of making me your register. I will render back all your remarks; and *I, not you*, shall have received usury by having read them. In the mean time, may the great Spirit have you in his keeping, and preserve our Englishmen from the inoculation of frivolity and sin upon French earth.

Allons—or what is it you say, instead of *good-bye*?

Mary sends her kind remembrance, and covets the remarks equally with me.

C. LAMB.

[Addressed to 'Mr. Thomas Manning, Maison Magram, No. 342 Boulevard Italien, Paris.'

The reference to the 'word-banker' and 'register' is explained by Manning's first letter to Lamb from Paris, in which he says: 'I . . . beg you to keep all my letters. I hope to send you many—and I may in the course of time, make some observations that I shall wish to recall to my memory when I return to England.'

'Are you and the First Consul *thick*?' Napoleon, with whom Manning was destined one day to be on terms. In 1803, on the declaration of war, when he wished to return to England, Manning's was the only passport that Napoleon signed; again, in 1817, on returning from China, Manning was wrecked in the Straits of Gaspar, and had to wait for a ship at Batavia, thence proceeding to St. Helena, where he conversed with the great exile.

'Rumfordising.' A word coined by Lamb from Sir Benjamin Thompson, Count von Rumford, the founder of the Royal Institution, the deviser of the Rumford stove, and a tireless scientific and philosophical experimentalist.

'Smell-fungus.' An allusion to Sterne's attack on Smollett, in *The Sentimental Journey*: 'The lamented Smelfungus travelled from Boulogne to Paris, from Paris to Rome, and so on; but he set out with the spleen and jaundice, and every object he passed by was discoloured or distorted.'

'The *Post*.' Lamb had been writing criticisms of plays; but Stuart, as we have seen, wanted them on the same night as the performance and Lamb found this impossible.

'Ludisti satis . . .' It should be *Lusisti*. From the end of book ii of the *Epistles* of Horace.

'I have done but one thing.' 'The Londoner,' referred to later.

'*Apropos*, I think you wrong about my play.' John Woodvil had just been published, and Lamb had sent Manning a copy. Manning, in return, had written from Paris early in February: 'I showed your Tragedy to Holcroft, who had taste enough to discover that 'tis full of poetry—but the plot he condemns *in toto*. Tell me how it succeeds. I think you were ill advised to retrench so much. I miss the beautiful Branches you have lopped off and regret them. In some of the pages the sprinkling of words is so thin as to be quite *outré*. There you were wrong again.'

'The Londoner' was published in the *Morning Post*, 1st February 1802. Concerning it Manning wrote, in his next letter—6th April 1802: 'I like your "Londoner" very much, there is a deal of happy fancy in it, but it is not strong enough to be seen by the generality of readers, yet if you were to write a volume of essays in the same stile you might be sure of its succeeding.' It would put the world still more in Manning's debt if we could attribute Lamb's subsequent activity as an essayist to this early suggestion.

'Found tongues in trees, etc.' *As You Like It*, II. i. 16.]

126. TO JOHN RICKMAN

16, Mitre Court Buildings, Inner Temple,
10th April 1802.

DEAR RICKMAN,

The enclosed letter explains itself. It will save me the danger of a corporal interview with the man-eater who, if very sharp-set, may take a fancy to me, if you will give me a short note, declaratory of probabilities. These from Him who hopes to see you once or twice more before he goes hence, to be no more seen: for there is no tippie nor tobacco in the grave, whereunto he hasteneth.

C. LAMB.

How clearly the Goul writes, and like a gentleman!

[Lamb's next letter to Manning answers one from Manning dated 6th April 1802, containing these passages:

. . . Mr. Gillet is an acquaintance I made one day at an eating house, by means of a metaphysical discussion we tumbled into. He is, *in fact*, an Englishman, but he has an employment under the French government, being inspector and Governor of the Workshops at Brussels—institutions to prevent Mendicity.

When we arrived at the Palace we found a difficulty in passing the Guard at the gate as it was rather late, and the palace was supposed sufficiently full of spectators—what plea do you think prevailed? That Mr. G. was an officer under government? No—that he had the billet of the Prefet of the Police, which happened to be the case? No—but 'twas this. 'Nous sommes Etrangers; nous sommes des Anglois. Citoyen!'—Do you think that a Frenchman would gain admittance to the Tower (to *see* it I mean not lodge there) or to the Gallery at St. James', a bit the faster, for crying out but I be de foreigner—I be vone frenchmans? I must praise the French Urbanity—they are truly polite to Foreigners, and the name of an Englishman is the best passport to every exhibition spectacle &c—We go to the Grand picture gallery any day of the decade—whereas tis open to the French in general but 3 or 4 days in 10. The Abbé Sicard gives particular séances expressly for the English, at the Deaf-Dumb Institution—Well having entered the palace and passed the guard at the foot of the staircase by the same plea, we placed ourselves in the Antichamber and I had again the satisfaction of seeing the Premier Consul go by, clad in his simple blue uniform—Oh what a God-like face! When he returned from the review, a lady who stood near me, stopped him and addressed him on the subject of some plan or invention she or her husband had discovered, and gave me a full opportunity of contemplating his divine countenance. . . .

. . . You don't tell me what the critics say to your play!—Write to me very very soon—What is Coleridge doing! Have you heard from Charles Lloyd lately? I shall surely write to him soon. The next time I write, which will be as soon as I have heard from you, I will give you some account of the French theatre, and other interesting matters. At present I have only room to say that I think the comic actors here superior to the English.]

127. TO THOMAS MANNING

[23rd April 1802.]

MY DEAR MANNING,

Although something of the latest, and after two months' waiting, your letter was highly gratifying. Some parts want a little explication; for example, 'the god-like face of the First Consul.' *What god* does he most resemble? Mars, Bacchus, or Apollo? or the god Serapis who, flying (as Egyptian chronicles deliver) from the fury of the dog Anubis (the hieroglyph of an English mastiff), lighted on Monomotapa (or the land of apes), by some thought to be Old France, and there set up a tyranny, &c. Our London prints of him represent him gloomy and sulky, like an angry Jupiter. I hear that he is very small, even less than me, who am 'less than the least of the Apostles,' at least than they are painted in the Vatican. I envy you your access to this great man, much more than your *séances* and *conversaciones*, which I have a shrewd suspicion must be something dull. What you assert concerning the actors of Paris, that they exceed our comedians, 'bad as ours are,' is *impossible*. In one sense it may be true, that their fine gentlemen, in what is called genteel comedy, may possibly be more brisk and *déagé* than Mr. Caulfield or Mr. Whitfield; but have any of them the power to move *laughter in excess*? or can a Frenchman *laugh*? Can they batter at your judicious ribs till they *shake*, nothing loth to be so shaken? This is John Bull's criterion, and it shall be mine. You are Frenchified. Both your tastes and morals are corrupt and perverted. By-and-by you will come to assert, that Buonaparte is as great a general as the old Duke of Cumberland, and deny that one Englishman can beat three Frenchmen. Read 'Henry the Fifth' to restore your orthodoxy. All things continue at a stay—still in London. I cannot repay your new novelties with my

stale reminiscences. Like the prodigal, I have spent my patrimony, and feed upon the superannuated chaff and dry husks of repentance; yet sometimes I remember with pleasure the hounds and horses, which I kept in the days of my prodigality. I find nothing new, nor anything that has so much of the gloss and dazzle of novelty, as may rebound in narrative, and cast a reflective glimmer across the channel. Something I will say about people that you and I know. Fenwick is still in debt, and the Professor has not done making love to his new spouse. I think he never looks into an almanack, or he would have found by the calendar that the honeymoon was extinct a moon ago. Lloyd has written to me and names you. I think a letter from Maison Magnan (is that a person or a thing?) would gratify him. G. Dyer is in love with an Ideot who loves a Doctor, who is incapable of loving anything but himself. A puzzling circle of perverse Providences! A maze as un-get-out-again-able as the House which Jack built. Southey is Secretary to the Chancellor of the Irish Exchequer; £400 a year. Stoddart is turned Doctor of Civil Law, and dwells in Doctor's Commons. I fear *his* commons are short, as they say.

Did I send you an epitaph I scribbled upon a poor girl who died at nineteen, a good girl and a pretty girl, and a clever girl, but strangely neglected by all her friends and kin?

Under this cold marble stone
Sleep the sad remains of one
Who, when alive, by few or none
Was loved, as loved she might have been,
If she prosperous days had seen,
Or had thriving been, I ween.
Only this cold funeral stone
Tells she was beloved by one,
Who on the marble graves his moan.

Brief, and pretty, and tender, is it not? I send you this, being the only piece of poetry I have *done*, since the muses all went with T. M. to Paris. I have neither stuff in my brain, nor paper in my drawer, to write you a longer letter. Liquor and company and wicked tobacco a'nights, have quite dispericraniated me, as one may say; but you who spiritualise upon Champagne may continue to write long letters, and stuff 'em with amusement to the end. Too long they cannot be, any more than a codicil to a

will which leaves me sundry parks and manors not specified in the deed. But don't be *two months* before you write again. These from merry old England, on the day of her valiant patron St. George.

C. LAMB.

['An epitaph.' These lines form the perfected eulogium upon Rickman's young friend, Mary Druitt, of Wimborne. They were printed in the *Morning Post* for 7th February 1804, signed C. L.

'Even less than me.' W. C. Hazlitt gives, in his book, *Mary and Charles Lamb*, a vivid impression of Lamb's spare figure. A farmer at Widford, Mr. Charles Tween, himself not a big man, told Mr. Hazlitt that when walking out with Lamb he would place his hands under his arm and lift him over the stiles as if it were nothing. Napoleon's height was five feet six or seven inches.

Thomas Caulfield, a brother of the antiquary and print-seller, James Caulfield, was a comedian and mimic at Drury Lane; Whitfield was an actor at Drury Lane, who later moved to Covent Garden.

'Maison Magnan.' Hitherto spelt 'Magram.' Lamb was very casual with French.

'An Idiot' was Miss Benger, I presume.]

128. TO S. T. COLERIDGE

September 8, 1802.

DEAR COLERIDGE,

I thought of not writing till we had performed some of our commissions; but we have been hindered from setting about them, which yet shall be done to a tittle. We got home very pleasantly on Sunday. We had Miss Buck's company nearly all the way. Mary is a good deal fatigued, and finds the difference of going to a place and coming *from* it. I feel that I shall remember your mountains to the last day I live. They haunt me perpetually. I am like a man who has been falling in love unknown to himself, which he finds out when he leaves the Lady. I do not remember any very strong impression while they were present; but, being gone, their mementos are shelved in my brain. We past a very pleasant little time with the Clarksons. Lloyd's hospitality is not extinct; it only was past into *them*. The Wordsworths are at Montagu's rooms, near neighbours to us. They dined with us yesterday, and I was their guide to Bartlemy Fair!

I shall put your letter in the penny post, and shall always do so, if you have no objection, for I don't want to see Stuart, our Dissolution was rather ambiguous and I am not sure he is not displeased. I was pleased to recognise your Blank verse Poem (the Picture) in the *Morning Post* of Monday. It reads very well and I feel some dignity in the notion of being able to understand it better than most Southern Readers.

I hope you got over the fatigue of Helvellin. I shall expect little notes now and then to accompany yours to Stuart, which will pay me for the pang I must feel! in defrauding the Company. Mind, if you think the Penny Post not safe or had otherwise rather I dropt 'em in myself, I will, but I hate to encounter that impudent Clerk.

I yesterday hunted about at Lackington's, &c., for Milton's *Prose Works*, which if I could have got reasonably I should have beg'd your acceptance. The only one I met with, the best Quarto, was 6 guineas—But I don't despair.

Observe the Lamb (but don't mark it) on those letters I am not to open.

My next letter I hope will contain some account of our commissions.

I am hurrying this off at my office where I am got for the first time to-day, and very awkward I feel and strange at Business. I forget the names of Books and feel myself not half so great a man as when I [was] a scrambler among mountains. I feel debased; but I shall soon break in my mountain spirit.

Particularly tell me about little *Pi-pos* (or flying Opossum) the only child (but one) I had ever an inclination to steal from its parents. That one was a Beggar's brat that I might have had cheap. I hope his little Rash has gone.

But don't be jealous. I have a very affectionate memory of you all, besides *Pi-pos*: but *Pipos* I especially love.

Remember me kindly to Hartley and Hartley's old friends at Greta Hall and very kindly to Sara. I may venture to add Mary's love, I am sure, tho' she does not sit beside me. Public offices scare away familiar faces and make ugly faces too familiar. Have you seen Stoddart and Allen? We past S. on the road.

God bless you all.

C. L.

[In the summer of 1802 the Lambs paid a sudden visit to Coleridge at Keswick. Afterwards they went to Grasmere, although the Wordsworths were away from home; but they saw Thomas Clarkson, the philanthropist, then living at Ullswater (see the next letter). They had reached London again on 5th September. Procter records that on being asked how he felt when among the lakes and mountains, Lamb replied that in order to bring down his thoughts from their almost painful elevation to the sober regions of life, he was obliged to think of the ham-and-beef shop near St. Martin's Lane.

The Clarksons were Thomas Clarkson, the philanthropist, and his wife. Miss Buck was Mrs. Clarkson's sister.

It was with Basil Montagu, the lawyer, that the Wordsworths were staying in London. A remark of Montagu's son Edward gave Wordsworth the idea for the poem about the weathercock and the trulls called *Anecdote for Fathers*. Coleridge's blank verse poem in the *Morning Post* begins:

Through weeds and thorns, and matted underwood
I force my way; now climb, and now descend
O'er rocks, or bare or mossy, with wild foot
Crushing the purple whorts; while oft unseen,
Hurrying along the drifted forest-leaves,
The seared snake rustles. . . .

Coleridge was to send letters to his wife, who was in London, under cover to Lamb, spelling his name with a final 'e' as an indication, and thus saving postage.

Pi-pos was Lamb's name for little Derwent Coleridge.]

129. TO THOMAS MANNING

24th Sept., 1802, London.

MY DEAR MANNING,

Since the date of my last letter, I have been a traveller. A strong desire seized me of visiting remote regions. My first impulse was to go and see Paris. It was a trivial objection to my aspiring mind, that I did not understand a word of the language, since I certainly intend some time in my life to see Paris, and equally certainly never intend to learn the language; therefore that could be no objection. However, I am very glad I did not go, because you had left Paris (I see) before I could have set out. I believe, Stoddart promising to go with me another year prevented that plan. My next scheme, (for to my restless, ambitious mind London was become a bed of thorns) was to visit the far-famed Peak in Derbyshire, where the Devil sits, they say, without breeches. *This* my purer mind rejected as indelicate. And my final resolve was a tour to the Lakes. I set out with Mary to

Keswick, without giving Coleridge any notice; for my time being precious did not admit of it. He received us with all the hospitality in the world, and gave up his time to show us all the wonders of the country. He dwells upon a small hill by the side of Keswick, in a comfortable house, quite enveloped on all sides by a net of mountains: great floundering bears and monsters they seemed, all couchant and asleep. We got in in the evening, travelling in a post-chaise from Penrith, in the midst of a gorgeous sunshine, which transmuted all the mountains into colours, purple, &c. &c. We thought we had got into Fairy Land. But that went off (as it never came again—while we stayed we had no more fine sunsets); and we entered Coleridge's comfortable study just in the dusk, when the mountains were all dark with clouds upon their heads. Such an impression I never received from objects of sight before, nor do I suppose I can ever again. Glorious creatures, fine old fellows, Skiddaw, &c. I never shall forget ye, how ye lay about that night, like an intrenchment; gone to bed, as it seemed for the night, but promising that ye were to be seen in the morning. Coleridge had got a blazing fire in his study; which is a large, antique, ill-shaped room, with an old-fashioned organ, never played upon, big enough for a church, shelves of scattered folios, an Æolian harp, and an old sofa, half-bed, &c. And all looking out upon the last fading view of Skiddaw and his broad-breasted brethren: what a night! Here we stayed three full weeks, in which time I visited Wordsworth's cottage, where we stayed a day or two with the Clarksons (good people and most hospitable, at whose house we tarried one day and night), and saw Lloyd. The Wordsworths were gone to Calais. They have since been in London and past much time with us: he is now gone into Yorkshire to be married to a girl of small fortune, but he is in expectation of augmenting his own in consequence of the death of Lord Lonsdale, who kept him out of his own in conformity with a plan my lord had taken up in early life of making everybody unhappy. So we have seen Keswick, Grasmere, Ambleside, Ulswater (where the Clarksons live), and a place at the other end of Ulswater—I forget the name—to which we travelled on a very sultry day, over the middle of Helvellyn. We have clambered up to the top of Skiddaw, and I have waded up the bed of Lodore. In fine, I have satisfied

myself, that there is such a thing as that which tourists call *romantic*, which I very much suspected before: they make such a spluttering about it, and toss their splendid epithets around them, till they give as dim a light as at four o'clock next morning the lamps do after an illumination. Mary was excessively tired, when she got about half-way up Skiddaw, but we came to a cold rill (than which nothing can be imagined more cold, running over cold stones), and with the reinforcement of a draught of cold water she surmounted it most manfully. Oh, its fine black head, and the bleak air atop of it, with a prospect of mountains all about, and about, making you giddy; and then Scotland afar off, and the border countries so famous in song and ballad! It was a day that will stand out, like a mountain, I am sure, in my life. But I am returned (I have now been come home near three weeks—I was a month out), and you cannot conceive the degradation I felt at first, from being accustomed to wander free as air among mountains, and bathe in rivers without being controlled by any one, to come home and *work*. I felt very *little*. I had been dreaming I was a very great man. But that is going off, and I find I shall conform in time to that state of life to which it has pleased God to call me. Besides, after all, Fleet-Street and the Strand are better places to live in for good and all than among Skiddaw. Still, I turn back to those great places where I wandered about, participating in their greatness. After all, I could not *live* in Skiddaw. I could spend a year—two, three years—among them, but I must have a prospect of seeing Fleet-Street at the end of that time, or I should mope and pine away, I know. Still, Skiddaw is a fine creature. My habits are changing, I think: *i.e.* from drunk to sober. Whether I shall be happier or not remains to be proved. I shall certainly be more happy in a morning; but whether I shall not sacrifice the fat, and the marrow, and the kidneys, *i.e.* the night, the glorious care-drowning night, that heals all our wrongs, pours wine into our mortifications, changes the scene from indifferent and flat to bright and brilliant!—O Manning, if I should have formed a diabolical resolution, by the time you come to England, of not admitting any spirituous liquors into my house, will you be my guest on such shameworthy terms? Is life, with such limitations, worth trying? The truth is, that my liquors bring a nest of

friendly harpies about my house, who consume me. This is a pitiful tale to be read at St. Gothard; but it is just now nearest my heart. Fenwick is a ruined man. He is hiding himself from his creditors, and has sent his wife and children into the country. Fell, my other drunken companion (that has been: *nam hic cæstus artemque repono*), is turned editor of a 'Naval Chronicle.' Godwin (with a pitiful artificial wife) continues a steady friend, though the same facility does not remain of visiting him often. That Bitch has detached Marshall from his house, Marshall the man who went to sleep when the 'Ancient Mariner' was reading: the old, steady, unalterable friend of the Professor. Holcroft is not yet come to town. I expect to see him, and will deliver your message. How I hate *this part* of a letter. Things come crowding in to say, and no room for 'em. Some things are too little to be told, *i.e.* to have a preference; some are too big and circumstantial. Thanks for yours, which was most delicious. Would I had been with you, benighted &c. I fear my head is turned with wandering. I shall never be the same acquiescent being. Farewell; write again quickly, for I shall not like to hazard a letter, not knowing where the fates have carried you. Farewell, my dear fellow.

C. LAMB.

[Lamb had suggested in Letter 125 that he knew some French. His desire to see Paris was not gratified until 1822.

The Lake visit requires a little annotation. Thomas Clarkson (1760-1846), the anti-slavery agitator, was then living at Eusemere, on Ullswater. Lord Lonsdale's debt was to Wordsworth's father, and had been repudiated, but his heir, his cousin William, on succeeding to the estates, paid it in full, with interest. It was to him that Wordsworth dedicated, in 1814, *The Excursion*. By the phrase, 'the Wordsworths,' Lamb means William and his sister Dorothy. The poet married on 4th October, 1802, Mary Hutchinson, aged thirty-two, who had been his schoolfellow at Penrith, and was now keeping house for her uncle, a farmer at Gallon Hill, near Scarborough.

Marshall we met in the letters to Godwin of 14th December 1800, and to Manning, 16th December 1800.

'*Nam hic cæstus . . .*' Virgil, *Æneid*, v. 484: Of the boxer who has fought his last fight. Here I lay down my gloves and the game.

'Holcroft'—Thomas Holcroft (1745-1809), a miscellaneous writer, who is best known by his play, *The Road to Ruin*, or by his *Memoirs*, now reprinted in the *World's Classics*. They were finished by Hazlitt. Lamb says of him in his 'Letter to Southey' that he was 'one of the most candid, most upright, and single-meaning men' that he had ever met.]

130. TO S. T. COLERIDGE

October 9, 1802.

CAROLUS AGNUS COLERIDGIO SUO S.

CARISSIME

Scribis, ut nummos scilicet epistolarios solvam et postremo in Tartara abeam: immo tu potius Tartaricum (ut aiunt) deprehendisti, qui me vernaculâ meâ linguâ pro scribâ conductio per tot annos satis eleganter usum ad Latinè impure et canino fere ore latrandum per tuasmet epistolas benè compositas et concinnatas percellere studueris. Conabor tamen: Attamen vereor, ut *Ædes* istas nostri Christi, inter quas tantâ diligentîâ magistri improbâ [? improbi] bonis literulis, quasi per clysterem quendam injectis, infrâ suprâque olim penitùs imbutus fui Barnesii et Marklandii doctissimorum virorum nominibus adhuc gaudentes, barbarismis meis peregrinis et aliunde quæsitis valde dehonestavero [*sic*]. Sed pergere quocunque placet. Adeste igitur, quotquot estis, conjugationum declinationumve turmæ, terribilia spectra, et tu imprimis ades, Umbra et Imago maxima obsoletæ (Diis gratiæ) Virgæ, quâ novissime in mentem receptâ, horrescunt subito natales [nates], et parum deest quo minùs braccas meas ultro usque ad crura demittam, et ipse puer pueriliter ejulem.

Ista tua Carmina Chamouniana satis grandia esse mihi constat; sed hoc mihi nonnihil displicet, quòd in iis illæ montium Grisosorum inter se responsiones totidem reboant anglicè, *God, God*, haud aliter atque temet audiui tuas montes Cumbrianas resonare docentes, *Tod, Tod*, nempe Doctorem infelicem: vocem certe haud Deum Sonantem. Pro cæteris plaudo.

Itidem comparationes istas tuas satis callidas et lepidas certè novi: sed quid hoc ad verum? cum illi Consulari viro et *mentem irritabilem* istam Julianam: et etiam *astutias frigidulas* quasdam Augusto propriiores, nequaquam congruenter uno afflatu comparationis causâ insedis affirmaveris: necnon nescio quid similitudinis etiam cum Tiberio tertio in loco solícite produxeris. Quid tibi equidem cum uno vel altero Cæsare, cum universi Duodecim ad comparationes tuas se ultro tulerint? Præterea, vetustati adnutans, comparationes iniquas odi.

Istas Wordsworthianas nuptias (vel potius cujusdam *Edmundi* tui) te retulisse mirificum gaudeo. Valeas, Maria, fortunata nimium, et antiquæ illæ Mariæ Virgini (comparatione plusquam

Cæsareanâ) forsitan comparanda, quoniam 'beata inter mulieres': et etiam fortasse Wordsworthium ipsum tuum maritum Angelo Saluatori æquare fas erit, quoniam e Cœlo (ut ille) descendunt et Musæ et ipsi Musicolæ: at Wordsworthium Musarum observantissimum semper novi. Necnon te quoque affinitate hâc novâ, Dorothea, gratulor: et tu certe alterum *donum Dei*.

Istum Ludum, quem tu, Coleridgi, Americanum garris, a Ludo (ut Ludi sunt) maximè abhorrentem prætereo: nempe quid ad Ludum attinet, totius illæ gentis Columbianæ, a nostrâ gente, eadem stirpe ortâ, ludi singuli causa voluntatem perperam alienare? Quæso ego materiam ludi: tu Bella ingeris.

Denique valeas, et quid de Latinitate meâ putes, dicas: facias ut oppossum illum nostrum volentem vel (ut tu malis) quendam Piscem errabundum, a me salvum et pulcherrimum esse jubeas. Valeant uxor tua cum Hartleio nostro. Soror mea salva est et ego: vos et ipsa salvere jubet. Ulterius progredi [?] progredi] non liquet: homo sum æratus.

P.S.—Pene mihi exciderat, apud me esse Librorum a Johanno Miltono Latinè scriptorum volumina duo, quæ (Deo volente) cum cæteris tuis libris ocyùs per Maria [?] ad te missura [*sic*] curabo; sed me in hoc tali genere rerum nullo modo *festinantem* novisti: habes confitentem reum. Hoc solum dici [*sic*] restat, prædicta volumina pulchra esse et omnia opera Latina J. M. in se continere. Circa defensionem istam Pro Popº. Angº. acerrimam in præsens ipse præclaro gaudio moror.

Jussa tua Stuartina faciam ut diligenter colam.

Iterum iterumque valeas:

Et facias memor sis nostri.

[I append a translation from the pen of Mr. Stephen Gwynn:

CHARLES LAMB TO HIS FRIEND COLERIDGE, GREETING

DEAR FRIEND

You write that I am to pay my debt, to wit in coin of correspondence, and finally that I am to go to Tartarus: no but it is you have caught a Tartar (as the saying is), since after all these years employing my own vernacular tongue, and prettily enough for a hired penman, you have set about to drive me by means of your well composed and neatly turned epistles to gross and almost doggish barking in the Latin. Still, I will try: And yet I fear that the Hostel of our Christ,—wherein by the exceeding diligence of a relentless master I was in days gone by deeply imbued from bottom to top with polite learning, instilled as it were by a dyster—which still glories in the names of the erudite

Barnes and Markland, will be vilely dishonoured by my outlandish and adscititious barbarisms. But I am determined to proceed, no matter whither. Be with me therefore all ye troops of conjugations and declensions, dread spectres, and approach thou chiefest, Shade and Phantom of the disused (thank Heaven) Birch, at whose entry to my imagination a sudden shiver takes my rump, and a trifle then more would make me begin to let down my breeches to my calves, and turning boy, howl boyishly.

That your Ode at Chamounix is a fine thing I am clear; but here is a thing offends me somewhat, that in the ode your answers of the Grison mountains to each other should so often echo in English God, God—in the very tone that I have heard your own lips teaching your Cumbrian mountains to resound Tod, Tod, meaning the unlucky doctor—a syllable assuredly of no Godlike sound. For the rest, I approve.

Moreover, I certainly recognize that your comparisons are acute and witty; but what has this to do with truth? since you have given to the great Consul at once that irritable mind of Julius, and also a kind of cold cunning, more proper to Augustus—attributing incongruous characteristics in one breath for the sake of your comparison: nay, you have even in the third instance laboriously drawn out some likeness to Tiberius. What had you to do with one Cæsar, or a second, when the whole Twelve offered themselves to your comparison? Moreover, I agree with antiquity, and think comparisons odious.

Your Wordsworth nuptials (or rather the nuptials of a certain Edmund of yours) fill me with joy in your report. May you prosper, Mary, fortunate beyond compare, and perchance comparable to that ancient Virgin Mary (a comparison more than Cæsarean) since 'blessed art thou among women': perhaps also it will be no impiety to compare Wordsworth himself your husband to the Angel of Salutation, since (like the angel) from heaven descend both Muses and the servants of the Muses: whose devoutest votary I always know Wordsworth to be. Congratulations to thee, Dorothea, in this new alliance: you also assuredly are another 'gift of God.'

As for that game with America you talk of, Coleridge, I pass it by as quite unfit for a game, as games go. For, tell me, what 'fun' is there in wickedly estranging the whole Columbian people from our people, who are of the same stock, for the sake of a single *jeu d'esprit*? I seek the material for fun, and you press War upon me.

Finally, fare you well, and pray tell me what you think of my Latinity. Kindly wish health and beauty from me to our flying possum or (as you prefer to call it) roving Fish. Good health to your wife and my friend Hartley. My sister and I are well. She also sends you greeting. I do not see how to get on farther: I am a bankrupt.

P.S.—I had almost forgot, I have by me two volumes of the Latin writings of John Milton, which (D.V.) I will have sent you sooner or later by sea: but you know me no way precipitate in this kind: the accused pleads guilty. This only remains to be said, that the aforesaid volumes are handsome and contain all the Latin works of J. M. At present I dwell with much delight on his vigorous defence of the English people.

I will be sure to observe diligently your Stuartial orders.
Again and again farewell: and pray be mindful of me.

Coleridge's *Hymn before Sun-rise, in the Vale of Chamouni*, was printed in the *Morning Post* for 11th September 1802. The poem contains this passage:

God! let the torrents, like a shout of nations,
Answer! and let the ice-plains echo, God!
God! sing ye meadow-streams with gladsome voice!
Ye pine-groves, with your soft and soul-like sounds!
And they too have a voice, yon piles of snow,
And in their perilous fall shall thunder, God!

Canon Ainger suggests, that by Tod, the unlucky doctor, Lamb meant Dr. William Dodd (1729-77), the compiler of the *Beauties of Shakespeare*, and the forger, who was hanged at Tyburn. This is so. Coleridge, in one of his journals, Mrs. Anderson points out, expressly says he made the mountains echo the name of Dr. Dodd.

'Your comparisons.' Coleridge's *Comparison of the Present State of France with that of Rome under Julius and Augustus Caesar* was printed in the *Morning Post*, 21st September, 25th September, and 2nd October 1802. See *Essays on His Own Times*, 1850, vol. ii, page 478.

Wordsworth's marriage to Mary Hutchinson, on 4th October, 1802, had called forth from Coleridge his ode on *Dejection*, printed in the *Morning Post* for the same day, in which Wordsworth was addressed as Edmund. In later editions Coleridge suppressed its personal character. Dorothea was, of course, Wordsworth's sister Dorothy.

Mr. Rendall gives me the following note on the American paragraph: Coleridge was evidently meditating an attack on America, but the game he proposed cannot now be identified. Bonaparte in this year demanded restraints on the English press, and the dismissal from England of French persons obnoxious to him. Coleridge, perhaps, wished to retaliate, by making fun of Lafayette, notorious as Washington's man in America, and as putting the American Declaration of Independence as a model before the National Assembly. Lafayette was hated by the Jacobins for his moderation, but Coleridge, with his 'Once a Jacobin, always a Jacobin' in the *Morning Post* at this time, would not choose to see that.

'Stuartial.' Referring to Daniel Stuart of the *Morning Post*.]

131. TO S. T. COLERIDGE

Oct. 11th, 1802.

DEAR COLERIDGE,

Your offer about the German poems is exceedingly kind; but I do not think it a wise speculation, because the time it would take you to put them into prose would be nearly as great as if you versified them. Indeed, I am sure you could do the one

nearly as soon as the other; so that, instead of a division of labour, it would be only a multiplication. But I will think of your offer in another light. I dare say I could find many things of a light nature to suit that paper, which you would not object to pass upon Stuart as your own, and I should come in for some light profits, and Stuart think the more highly of your assiduity. 'Bishop Hall's Characters' I know nothing about, having never seen them. But I will reconsider your offer, which is very plausible; for as to the drudgery of going every day to an editor with my scraps, like a pedlar, for him to pick out, and tumble about my ribbons and posies, and to wait in his lobby, &c., no money could make up for the degradation. You are in too high request with him to have anything unpleasant of that sort to submit to.

It was quite a slip of my pen, in my Latin letter, when I told you I had Milton's Latin Works. I ought to have said his Prose Works, in two volumes, Birch's edition, containing all, both Latin and English, a fuller and better edition than Lloyd's of Toland. It is completely at your service, and you must accept it from me; at the same time, I shall be much obliged to you for your Latin Milton, which you think you have at Howell's; it will leave me nothing to wish for but the 'History of England,' which I shall soon pick up for a trifle. I will send you the Milton with any choice books you may want from Howell's per wagon, or if you prefer it all your books by sea; but I suppose in the latter case there is a hazard of their not coming to hand. Wordsworth has got the oilsilk you bespoke. Mary did not make it up for fear of not doing it right, and you must have soles of Cork or something to your feet, or you will rub the silk to pieces the first time of using: these she did not know how to put on: or I promise you she would not have spared any trouble. Wordsworth has also some snuff for you *secundum recipe*—and he forgot to take, what we still have for you, a black Cap: but you must write me word whether the Cap and Miltons are worth paying carriage for. You have a Milton; but it is pleasanter to eat one's own peas out of one's own garden, than to buy them by the peck at Covent Garden; and a book reads the better, which is our own, and has been so long known to us, that we know the topography of its blots and dog's-ears, and can trace the dirt in it to having read it at tea with buttered muffins, or over a pipe,

which I think is the maximum. But, Coleridge, you must accept these little things, and not think of returning money for them, for I do not set up for a factor or general agent. As for the fantastic debt of 15*l.*, I'll think you were dreaming, and not trouble myself seriously to attend to you. My bad Latin you properly correct; but *natales* for *nates* was an inadvertency: I knew better. *Progredi* or *progrēdi* I thought indifferent, my authority being Ainsworth. However, as I have got a fit of Latin, you will now and then indulge me with an *epistola*. I pay the postage of this, and propose doing it by turns. In that case I can now and then write to you without remorse; not that you would mind the money, but you have not always ready cash to answer small demands—the *epistolarii nummi*.

I had one reason for writing now—what you will be extremely glad to hear. I have just received intelligence, that Billy Winch is doing extremely well. He went out to India on the Bengal Establishment as Cadet, and is come to be a Lieutenant, he is extremely respected, has learned the language, and is thought a clever man. The Rogue was courting his Colonel's daughter, when my informer heard last of him. He had not any encouragement from the family; but the esteem he was in secured him from any mortifying repulse.—My authority is a good-natured young man, who was a little time at Xts, is now in the India House, Robinson: he says he and his father travelled into Devonshire with you, and you were very kind to him.

Your 'Epigram on the Sun and Moon in Germany' is admirable. Take 'em all together, they are as good as Harrington's. I will muster up all the conceits I can, and you shall have a packet some day. You and I together can answer all demands surely: you, mounted on a terrible charger (like Homer in the Battle of the Books) at the head of the cavalry: I will lead the light horse. I have just heard from Stoddart. Allen and he intend taking Keswick in their way home. Allen wished particularly to have it a secret that he is in Scotland, and wrote to me accordingly very urgently. As luck was, I had told not above three or four; but Mary had told Mrs. Green of Christ's Hospital! Lloyd has written me a fine letter of friendship all about himself and Sophia and love and cant: which I have not answered; but it will be done very plainly and sincerely without acrimony. For

the present, farewell: never forgetting love to Pi-pos and his friends.
C. LAMB.

[Coleridge, who seems to have been asked by Stuart of the *Morning Post* for translations of German verse, had suggested, I presume, that he should supply Lamb (who knew no German) with literal prose translations, and that Lamb should versify them, as he had in the case of 'Thekla's Song' in Coleridge's translation of the first part of *Wallenstein* nearly three years before. Lamb's suggestion is that he should send to Stuart epigrams and paragraphs in Coleridge's name. Whether or not he did so, I cannot say.

Bishop Hall's *Characters of Vices and Virtues* was published in 1608. Coleridge may have suggested that Lamb should imitate them for the *Morning Post*. Lamb later came to know Hall's satires, for he quotes from them in his review of Barron Field's poems in 1820.

Milton's prose works were edited by Thomas Birch, and by John Toland in folio.

'My bad Latin.' In the letter of 9th October 1802. Ainsworth was Robert Ainsworth, compiler of the *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae*, 1736, for many years the best Latin dictionary.

'Your Epigram.' Coleridge's Epigram *On the Curious Circumstance that in the German Language the Sun is feminine and the Moon masculine*. It appeared in the *Morning Post* on 11th October 1802. Coleridge had been sending epigrams and other verse to the *Post* for some time. Harrington was Sir John Harrington (1561-1612), the author of many epigrams.

Stoddart and Allen we have met.

'Mrs. Green.' In 1837 or thereabouts there were two Misses Green at Christ's Hospital, one of whom was Matron, 'who could no more have believed in a plurality of matrons, than I in a multiplication of Prime Ministers or Masters of Trinity. . . . It was a pleasure in after years to lead on the dear old lady to tell of the past, which was her present, of Coleridge, Legrice, Lamb, and their contemporaries, and by dint of attentive listening and happy questioning, to win the praise, as I did, of "most amusing conversation." None the less did I, as a new boy, fear her as if she had been one of the weird sisters.'—From 'Recollections of a New Boy' in *Gleanings from The Blue*, 1881.

Mrs. Anderson's notes: 'The Wordsworths were in London till 22nd September, having arrived there from Calais on 30th August. Billy Winch was a Christ's Hospital boy. He was in the 1st Regt. of Native Infantry, promoted captain in 1805, and died 3rd August 1806.']

132. TO S. T. COLERIDGE

Oct. 23rd, 1802.

Your kind offer I will not a second time refuse. You shall send me a packet and I will do them into English with great

care. Is not there one about W^m. Tell, and would not that in the present state of discussions be likely to *tell*? The Epigrams I meant are to be found at the end of Harrington's Translation of Orlando Furioso; if you could get the book, they would some of them answer your purpose to modernize. If you can't, I fancy I can. Baxter's Holy Commonwealth I have luckily met with, and when I have sent it, you shall if you please consider yourself indebted to me 3s. 6d. the cost of it: especially as I purchased it after your solemn injunctions. The plain case with regard to my presents (which you seem so to shrink from) is that I have not at all affected the character of a DONOR, or thought of violating your sacred Law of Give and Take: but I have been *taking* and partaking the good things of your House (when I know you were not over-abounding) and I now *give* unto you of mine; and by the grace of God I happen to be myself a little super-abundant at present. I expect I shall be able to send you my final parcel in about a week: by that time I shall have gone thro' all Milton's Latin Works. There will come with it the Holy Commonwealth, and the identical North American Bible which you helped to dog-ear at Xt's.—I call'd at Howell's for your little Milton, and also to fetch away the White Cross Street Library Books, which I have not forgot: but your books were not in a state to be got at then, and Mrs. H. is to let me know when she packs up. They will be sent by sea; and my little præcursor will come to you by the Whitehaven waggon accompanied with pens, penknife &c.—Mrs. Howell was as usual very civil; and asked with great earnestness, if it were likely you would come to Town in the winter. She has a friendly eye upon you.

I read daily your political essays. I was particularly pleased with 'Once a Jacobin': though the argument is obvious enough, the style was less swelling than your things sometimes are, and it was plausible *ad populum*. A vessel has just arrived from Jamaica with the news of poor Sam Le Grice's death. He died at Jamaica of the yellow fever. His course was rapid and he had been very foolish; but I believe there was more of kindness and warmth in him than in almost any other of our schoolfellows. I have had no account a long time of Favell. The annual meeting of the Blues is to-morrow, at the London Tavern, where poor Sammy dined with them two years ago, and attracted the

notice of all by the singular foppishness of his dress. When men go off the stage so early, it scarce seems a noticeable thing in their epitaphs, whether they had been wise or silly in their lifetime.

I am glad the snuff and Pi-pos's Books please. 'Goody Two Shoes' is almost out of print. Mrs. Barbauld's stuff has banished all the old classics of the nursery; and the shopman at Newbery's hardly deigned to reach them off an old exploded corner of a shelf, when Mary asked for them. Mrs. B.'s and Mrs. Trimmer's nonsense lay in piles about. Knowledge insignificant and vapid as Mrs. B.'s books convey, it seems, must come to a child in the *shape of knowledge*, and his empty noddle must be turned with conceit of his own powers when he has learnt that a Horse is an animal, and Billy is better than a Horse, and such like; instead of that beautiful Interest in wild tales which made the child a man, while all the time he suspected himself to be no bigger than a child. Science has succeeded to Poetry no less in the little walks of children than with men. Is there no possibility of averting this sore evil? Think what you would have been now, if instead of being fed with Tales and old wives' fables in childhood, you had been crammed with geography and natural history?

Damn them!—I mean the cursed Barbauld Crew, those Blights and Blasts of all that is Human in man and child.

As to the Translations, let me do two or three hundred lines, and then do you try the Nostrums upon Stuart in any way you please. If they go down I will bray more. In fact, if I got or could but get 50*l.* a year only, in addition to what I have, I should live in affluence.

Have you anticipated it, or could not you give a Parallel of Bonaparte with Cromwell, particularly as to the contrast in their deeds affecting *foreign* states? Cromwell's interference for the Albigenes, B[uonaparte]'s against the Swiss. Then Religion would come in; and Milton and you could rant about our countrymen of that period. This is a hasty suggestion, the more hasty because I want my Supper. I have just finished Chapman's Homer. Did you ever read it?—it has most the continuous power of interesting you all along, like a rapid original, of any, and in the uncommon excellence of the more finished parts goes beyond Fairfax or any of 'em. The metre is fourteen syllables, and capable of all sweetness and grandeur. Cowper's damn'd

blank verse detains you every step with some heavy Miltonism; Chapman gallops off with you his own free pace. Take a simile for an example. The council breaks up—

Being abroad, the earth was overlaid
With flockers to them, that came forth; as when of frequent bees
Swarms rise out of a hollow rock, repairing the degrees
Of their egression endlessly, with ever rising new
From forth their sweet nest; as their store, still as it faded, grew,
And never would cease sending forth her clusters to the spring,
They still crowd out so: this flock here, that there, belabouring
The loaded flowers. So, &c. &c.

[*Iliad*, book ii, 70-7.]

What *endless egression of phrases* the dog commands!

Take another: Agamemnon wounded, bearing his wound heroically for the sake of the army (look below) to a woman in labour.

He, with his lance, sword, mighty stones, poured his heroic wreck
On other squadrons of the foe, whiles yet warm blood did break
Thro' his cleft veins: but when the wound was quite exhaust and crude,
The eager anguish did approve his princely fortitude.
As when most sharp and bitter pangs distract a labouring dame,
Which the divine Ilithiæ, that rule the painful frame
Of human childbirth, pour on her; the Ilithiæ that are
The daughters of Saturnia; with whose extreme repair
The woman in her travail strives to take the worst it gives;
With thought, it *must be*, 'tis love's fruit, the end for which *she* lives;
The mean to make herself new born, what comforts will redound:
So, &c.

[*Iliad*, book xi, 228-39.]

I will tell you more about Chapman and his peculiarities in my next. I am much interested in him.

Yours ever affectionately, and Pi-Pos's.

C. L.

['North American Bible.' The Indian translation of the Bible by the Rev. John Elliot. The actual copy at Christ's Hospital was sold at Sotheby's not long ago.

Coleridge was just now contributing political essays as well as verse to the *Morning Post*. 'Once a Jacobin always a Jacobin' appeared on 21st October 1802. These were afterwards reprinted in *Essays on His Own Times*. *Ad populum* is a reminder of Coleridge's first political essays, the *Conciones ad Populum* of 1795.

Samuel Le Grice was a brother of Charles Valentine Le Grice. Favell was Samuel Favell, also an old 'Blue.'

'*Goody Two Shoes*.' One of Newbery's most famous books for children, sometimes attributed to Goldsmith, though, I think, wrongly.

Mrs. Barbauld (1743-1825) was the author of *Hymns in Prose for Children*, and she contributed to her brother John Aikin's *Evenings at Home*, both very popular books. Lamb, who afterwards came to know Mrs. Barbauld, described her and Mrs. Inchbald and Mrs. Godwin, who as a publisher called herself Baldwin, as the three bald women. Mrs. Sarah Trimmer (1741-1810) was the author of many books for children; she lives by the *Story of the Robins*.

This attack on the conventional book for children at that time is illuminating, when we remember that within three or four years Lamb and his sister (who had been to the shop for specimens of the old style) were to write no fewer than six juvenile works in prose and verse, one of which, at any rate, the *Tales from Shakespeare*, has become a classic.

The translation for Stuart either was not made or not accepted; nor did Coleridge carry out the project of the parallel of Bonaparte with Cromwell. Hallam, however, did so in his *Constitutional History of England*, unfavourably to Cromwell.

George Chapman's *Odyssey* was paraphrased by Lamb in his *Adventures of Ulysses*, 1808. Lamb either did not return to the subject with Coleridge, or his 'next letter' has been lost.]

133. TO S. T. COLERIDGE

Nov. 4th, 1802.

Observe, there comes to you, by the Kendal waggon to-morrow, the illustrious 5th of November, a box, containing the Miltons, the strange American Bible, with White's brief note, to which you will attend; Baxter's 'Holy Commonwealth,' for which you stand indebted to me 3s. 6d.; an odd volume of Montaigne, being of no use to me, I having the whole; certain books belonging to Wordsworth, as do also the strange thick-hoofed shoes, which are very much admired at in London. All these sundries I commend to your most strenuous looking after. If you find the Miltons in certain parts dirtied and soiled with a crumb of right Gloucester blacked in the candle (my usual supper), or peradventure a stray ash of tobacco wafted into the crevices, look to that passage more especially: depend upon it, it contains good matter. I have got your little Milton which, as it contains Salmasius—and I make a rule of never hearing but one side of the question (why should I distract myself?)—I shall return to you when I pick up the *Latina opera*. The first Defence is the greatest work among them,

because it is uniformly great, and such as is befitting the very mouth of a great nation speaking for itself. But the second Defence, which is but a succession of splendid episodes slightly tied together, has one passage which if you have not read, I conjure you to lose no time, but read it; it is his consolations in his blindness, which had been made a reproach to him. It begins whimsically, with poetical flourishes about Tiresias and other blind worthies (which still are mainly interesting as displaying his singular mind, and in what degree poetry entered into his daily soul, not by fits and impulses, but engrained and innate); but the concluding page, *i.e.* of *this passage* (not of the *Defensio*) which you will easily find, divested of all brags and flourishes, gives so rational, so true an enumeration of his comforts, so human, that it cannot be read without the deepest interest. Take one touch of the religious part:—*Et sane haud ultima Dei cura cæci*—(*we blind folks*, I understand it, not *nos* for *ego*)—*sumus; qui nos, quominus quicquam aliud præter ipsum cernere valemus, eo clementius atque benignius respicere dignatur. Væ qui illudit nos, væ qui lædit, execratione publica devovendo; nos ab injuriis hominum non modo incolumes, sed pene sacros divina lex reddidit, divinus favor: nec tam oculorum hebetudine quam cælestium alarum umbrâ has nobis fecisse tenebras videtur, factas illustrare rursus interiore ac longe præstabiliore lumine haud raro solet. Huc refero, quod et amici officiosius nunc etiam quam solebant, colunt, observant, adsunt; quod et nonnulli sunt, quibuscum Pyladeas atque Theseas alternare voces verorum amicorum liceat.*

Vade gubernaculum mei pedis.

Da manum ministro amico.

Da collo manum tuam, ductor autem viæ ero tibi ego.

All this, and much more, is highly pleasing to know. But you may easily find it;—and I don't know why I put down so many words about it, but for the pleasure of writing to you and the want of another topic.

Yours ever,

C. LAMB.

To-morrow I expect with anxiety S. T. C.'s letter to Mr. Fox.

[Lamb refers to Milton's *Defensio Secunda pro Populo Anglicano contra*

Alexandrum Morum Ecclesiasten. The following is a translation of the Latin passage by Robert Fellowes:

And indeed, in my blindness, I enjoy in no inconsiderable degree the favour of the Deity; who regards me with more tenderness and compassion in proportion as I am able to behold nothing but himself. Woe to him who insults me, who maligns and merits public execration! For the divine law not only shields me from injury, but almost renders me too sacred to attack; not indeed so much from the privation of my sight, as from the overshadowing of those heavenly wings, which seem to have occasioned this obscurity; and which, when occasioned, he is wont to illuminate with an interior light, more precious and more pure. To this I ascribe the more tender assiduities of my friends, their soothing attentions, their kind visits, their reverential observances; among whom there are some with whom I may interchange the Pyladean and Thesean dialogue of inseparable friends.

Proceed and be the rudder of my feet,
Lend your hand to your devoted friend,
Throw your arm round my neck, and
I will conduct you on the way.

Milton used separate passages, one from Euripides's *Orestes* and the second from *Heracles Mad.*

Coleridge's first letter to Charles James Fox was printed in the *Morning Post* for 4th November 1802, his second on 9th November.]

134. TO THOMAS MANNING

[November 1802.]

MY DEAR MANNING,

I must positively write, or I shall miss you at Toulouse. I sit here like a decayed minute hand (I lie; *that* does not *sit*), and being myself the exponent of no time, take no heed how the clocks about me are going. You possibly by this time may have explored all Italy, and toppled, unawares, into Etna, while you went too near those rotten-jawed, gap-toothed, old worn-out chaps of hell,—while I am meditating a quiescent letter to the honest postmaster at Toulouse. But in case you should not have been *felo de se*, this is to tell you, that your letter was quite to my palate—in particular your just remarks upon Industry, damned Industry (though indeed you left me to explore the reason), were highly relishing.

I've often wished I lived in the Golden Age, when shepherds

lay stretched upon flowers, and roused themselves at their leisure, —the genius there is in a man's natural idle face, that has not learned his multiplication table! before doubt, and propositions, and corollaries, got into the world! Now, as Joseph Cottle, a Bard of Nature, sings, going up Malvern Hills,

How steep! how painful the ascent!
It needs the evidence of *close deduction*
To know that ever I shall gain the top.

You must know that Joe is lame, so that he had some reason for so singing. These two lines, I assure you, are taken *totidem literis* from a very popular poem. Joe is also an Epic Poet as well as a Descriptive, and has written a tragedy, though both his drama and epopoica are strictly *descriptive*, and chiefly of the *Beauties of Nature*, for Joe thinks *man* with all his passions and frailties not a proper subject of the *Drama*. Joe's tragedy hath the following surpassing speech in it. Some king is told that his enemy has engaged twelve archers to come over in a boat from an enemy's country and way-lay him; he thereupon pathetically exclaims—

Twelve, dost thou say? Curse on those dozen villains!

Cottle read two or three acts to us, very gravely on both sides, till he came to this heroic touch,—and then he asked what we laughed at? I had no more muscles that day. A poet that chooses to read out his own verses has but a limited power over you. There is a bound where his authority ceases.

A propose: if you should go to Florence or to Rome, inquire what works are extant in gold, silver, bronze, or marble, of Benvenuto Cellini, a Florentine artist, whose Life doubtless, you have read; or, if not, without controversy you must read: so hark ye, send for it immediately from Lane's circulating library. It is always put among the romances, very properly; but you have read it, I suppose. In particular, inquire at Florence for his colossal bronze statue (in the grand square or somewhere) of Perseus. You may read the story in Tooke's 'Pantheon.'

Nothing material has *transpired* in these parts. Coleridge has indited a violent philippic against Mr. Fox in the 'Morning Post,' which is a compound of expressions of humility, gentlemen-

ushering-in most arrogant charges. It will do Mr. Fox no real injury among those that know him.

[*Nine lines erased.*]

[Manning's letter of 10th September had told Lamb he was on his way to Toulouse.

'Gap-toothed.' Chaucer has 'gat-toothed.'

'Cellini's Life.' Lamb would probably have read the translation by Nugent, 1771. Cellini's Perseus in bronze is in the Loggia de' Lanzi at Florence.]

135. TO JOHN RICKMAN

Jan. 25th, 1803.

DEAR RICKMAN,

You do not happen to have any place at your disposal which would suit a decayed Literatus? I do not much expect that you have, or that you will go much out of the way to serve the object, when you hear it is Fenwick. But the case is, by a *mistaking* of *his turn*, as they call it, he is reduced, I am afraid, to extremities, and would be extremely glad of a place in an office. Now it does sometimes happen, that just as a man wants a place, a place wants him; and though this is a lottery to which none but G. B. would choose to trust his all, there is no harm just to call in at Despair's office for a friend, and see if *his* number is come up (B.'s further case I enclose by way of episode). Now, if you should happen, or anybody you know, to want a *hand*, here is a young man of solid but not brilliant genius, who would turn his hand to the making out dockets, penning a manifesto, or scoring a tally, not the worse (I hope) for knowing Latin and Greek, and having in youth conversed with the philosophers. But from these follies I believe he is thoroughly awakened, and would bind himself by a terrible oath never to imagine himself an extraordinary genius again.

[W. C. Hazlitt's text, which I follow here, makes Lamb appeal for Fenwick; but other editors say Fell—except Talfourd, who says F. If, as Lamb says in a previous letter, Fell was bound for Newgate and Fenwick only for the Fleet, probably it was Fenwick. But the matter is not very important. Fenwick and Fell both came into Lamb's life through Godwin and at this point they drop out. The enclosure concerning George Burnett is missing.

Rickman was now installed in New Palace Yard, Westminster, as secretary to Speaker Abbot.

The famous letter that follows should have an introduction here. Briefly, Manning had just written, from Paris, the following startling news:

I am actually thinking of Independent Tartary as I write this, but you go out and skate—you go out and walk some times? Very true, that's a distraction—but the moment I set myself down quietly to any-thing, in comes Independent Tartary—for example I attend chemical lectures but every drug that Mr. Vauquelin presents to me tastes of Cream of Tartar—in short I am become good for nothing for a time, and as I said before, I should not have written now, but to assure you of my friendly and affectionate remembrance, but as you are not in the same unhappy circumstances, I expect you'll write to me and not measure page for page. This is the first letter I have begun for England for three months except one I sent to my Father yesterday.

Manning returned to London before leaving for China. He did not sail until 1806.]

136. TO THOMAS MANNING

[Dated at end: 19th February 1803.]

MY DEAR MANNING,

The general scope of your letter afforded no indications of insanity, but some particular points raised a scruple. For God's sake don't think any more of 'Independent Tartary.' What have you to do among such Ethiopians? Is there no *lineal descendant* of Prester John?

Is the chair empty? Is the sword unswayed?—depend upon't they'll never make you their king, as long as any branch of that great stock is remaining. I tremble for your Christianity. They'll certainly circumcise you. Read Sir John Mandevil's travels to cure you, or come over to England. There is a Tartarman now exhibiting at Exeter Change. Come and talk with him, and hear what he says first. Indeed, he is no very favorable specimen of his Countrymen! But perhaps the best thing you can do, is to *try* to get the idea out of your head. For this purpose repeat to yourself every night, after you have said your prayers, the words Independent Tartary, Independent Tartary, two or three times, and associate with them the *idea of oblivion* ('tis Hartley's method with obstinate memories), or say, Independent, Independent, have I not already got an *Independence*?

That was a clever way of the old puritans—pun-divinity. My dear friend, think what a sad pity it would be to bury such *parts* in heathen countries, among nasty, unconvertible, horse-belching, Tartar people! Some say, they are Cannibals; and then conceive a Tartar-fellow *eating* my friend, and adding the *cool malignity* of mustard and vinegar! I am afraid 'tis the reading of Chaucer has misled you; his foolish stories about Cambuscan and the ring, and the horse of brass. Believe me, there's no such things, 'tis all the poet's *invention*; but if there were such *darling* things as old Chaucer sings, I would *up* behind you on the Horse of Brass, and frisk off for Prester John's Country. But these are all tales; a Horse of Brass never flew, and a King's daughter never talked with Birds! The Tartars, really, are a cold, insipid, smouchey set. You'll be sadly moped (if you are not eaten) among them. Pray *try* and cure yourself. Take Hellebore (the counsel is Horace's, 'twas none of my thought *originally*). Shave yourself oftener. Eat no saffron, for saffron-eaters contract a terrible Tartar-like yellow. Pray, to avoid the fiend. Eat nothing that gives the heart-burn. *Shave the upper lip*. Go about like an European. Read no books of voyages (they're nothing but lies): only now and then a Romance, to keep the fancy *under*. Above all, don't go to any sights of *wild beasts*. *That has been your ruin*. Accustom yourself to write familiar letters on common subjects to your friends in England, such as are of a moderate understanding. And think about common things more. There's your friend Holcroft now, has written a play. You used to be fond of the drama. Nobody went to see it. Notwithstanding this, with an audacity perfectly original, he faces the town down in a preface, that they *did like* it very much. I have heard a waspish punster say, 'Sir, why did you not laugh at my jest?' But for a man boldly to face me out with, 'Sir, I maintain it, you did laugh at my jest,' is a little too much. I have seen H. but once. He spoke of you to me in honorable terms. H. seems to me to be drearily dull. Godwin is dull, but then he has a dash of affectation, which smacks of the coxcomb, and your coxcombs are always agreeable. I supped last night with Rickman, and met a merry *natural* captain, who pleases himself vastly with once having made a Pun at Otaheite in the O. language. 'Tis the same man who said Shakspeare he liked, because he was so *much*

of the Gentleman. Rickman is a man 'absolute in all numbers.' I think I may one day bring you acquainted, if you do not go to Tartary first; for you'll never come back. Have a care, my dear friend, of Anthropophagi! their stomachs are always craving. But if you do go among [them] pray contrive to *stink* as soon as you can that you may [?] not] hang a [?] on] hand at the Butcher's. 'Tis terrible to be weighed out for 5d. a-pound. To sit at table (the reverse of fishes in Holland), not as a guest, but as a meat.

God bless you: do come to England. Air and exercise may do great things. Talk with some Minister. Why not your father?

God dispose all for the best. I have discharged my duty.

Your sincere frd,

C. LAMB.

[Prester John, the name given by old writers to the King of Ethiopia in Abyssinia. A corruption of Belul Gian, precious stone; in Latin first Johanus preciosus, then Presbyter Johannes, and then Prester John. In Sir John Mandeville's *Voyage and Travails*, 1356, Prester John is said to be a linear descendant of Ogier the Dane. Hartley would be David Hartley, the metaphysician, after whom Coleridge's son was named. The reader must go to Chaucer's *Squire's Tale* for Cambuscan, King of Sarra, in Tartary; his horse of brass which conveyed him in a day wherever he would go; and the ring which enabled his daughter Canacee to understand the language of birds.

Holcroft's play was *A Tale of Mystery*.

The merry natural captain was James Burney (1750-1821), with whom the Lambs soon became very friendly. Later he was promoted to admiral. He was the centre of their whist-playing circle. Burney, who was brother of Madame D'Arblay, had sailed with Captain Cook.

'The reverse of fishes in Holland.' An allusion to Andrew Marvell's whimsical satire against the Dutch:

The fish ofttimes the burgher dispossessed
And sat not as a meat but as a guest.

'Why not your father?' Manning's father was the Rev. William Manning, rector of Diss, in Norfolk, who died in 1810.]

137. TO THOMAS MANNING

March, 1803.

DEAR MANNING,

I send you some verses I have made on the death of a young Quaker you may have heard me speak of as being in love with for some years while I lived at Pentonville, though I had never spoken

to her in my life. She died about a month since. If you have interest with the Abbé de Lisle, you may get 'em translated: he has done as much for the Georgics.

HESTER

When maidens such as Hester die,
Their place ye may not well supply,
Though ye among a thousand try,
With vain endeavour.

A month or more hath she been dead,
Yet cannot I by force be led
To think upon the wormy bed,
And her together.

A springy motion in her gait,
A rising step, did indicate
Of pride and joy no common rate,
That flush'd her spirit.

I know not by what name beside
I shall it call:—if 'twas not pride,
It was a joy to *that* allied,
She did inherit.

Her parents held the Quaker rule,
Which doth the human feeling cool,
But she was train'd in Nature's school,
Nature had blest her.

A waking eye, a prying mind,
A heart that stirs, is hard to bind,
A hawk's keen sight ye cannot blind,
Ye could not Hester.

My sprightly neighbour, gone before
To that unknown and silent shore,
Shall we not meet, as heretofore,
Some summer morning,

When from thy cheerful eyes a ray
Hath struck a bliss upon the day,
A bliss that would not go away,
A sweet forewarning?

What think you of destroying Xtianity by some such familiar couplets as these; easy to be remember'd from their briefness and affecting from this particularity. Videlicet—

Among those whom by the Prophet's command the bears ate up
Was pretty little Master Jacky Gupp.

Such things come home to a parent's bosom.

Yours &c.

C. LAMB.

[The young Quaker was Hester Savory, the daughter of Joseph Savory, a goldsmith of the Strand. She was married 1st July 1802, and died a few months after.

'The Abbé de Lisle.' L'Abbé Jacques Delille (1738-1813), known by his *Géorgiques*, 1770, a translation into French of Virgil's *Georgics*.]

138. TO WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

[Dated at end: *5th March 1803*.]

DEAR WORDSWORTH,

Having a Guinea of your sister's left in hand, after all your commissions, and as it does not seem likely that you will trouble us, as the phrase is, for some time to come, I send you a pound note, and with it the best things in the verse way I have lit upon for many a day. I believe they will be new to you. You know Cotton, who wrote a 2^d part to Walton's Angler. A volume of his miscellaneous poems is scarce. Take what follows from a poem call'd Winter. I omit 20 verses, in which a storm is described, to hasten to the best:—

21

Louder, and louder, still they ¹ come,
Nile's Cataracts to these are dumb,
The Cyclops to these Blades are still,
Whose anvils shake the burning hill.

22

Were all the stars-enlighten'd skies
As full of ears, as sparkling eyes,
This rattle in the crystal hall
Would be enough to deaf them all.

¹ The winds.

23

What monstrous Race is hither tost,
Thus to alarm our British Coast,
With outcries such as never yet
War, or confusion, could beget?

24

Oh! now I know them, let us home,
Our mortal Enemy is come,
Winter, and all his blustering train
Have made a voyage o'er the main.

27

With bleak, and with congealing winds,
The earth in shining chain he binds;
And still as he doth further pass,
Quarries his way with liquid glass.

28

Hark! how the Blusterers of the Bear
Their gibbous Cheeks in triumph bear,
And with continued shouts do ring
The entry of their palsied king!

29

The squadron, nearest to your eye,
Is his forlorn of Infantry,
Bowmen of unrelenting minds,
Whose shafts are feather'd with the winds.

30

Now you may see his vanguard rise
Above the earthy precipice,
Bold Horse, on bleakest mountains bred,
With hail, instead of provend, fed.

31

Their lances are the pointed locks,
Torn from the brows of frozen rocks,
Their shields are chrystal as their swords,
The steel the rusted rock affords.

32

See, the Main Body now appears!
And hark! th' Æolian Trumpeters.
By their hoarse levers do declare,
That the bold General rides there.

33

And look where mantled up in white
He sleds it, like the Muscovite.
I know him by the port he bears,
And his lifeguard of mountaineers.

34

Their caps are furr'd with hoary frosts,
The bravery their cold kingdom boasts;
Their spungy plads are milk-white frieze,
Spun from the snowy mountain's fleece.

35

Their partizans are fine carv'd glass,
Fring'd with the morning's spangled grass;
And pendant by their brawny thighs
Hang cimetars of burnish'd ice.

38

Fly, fly, the foe advances fast,
Into our fortress let us haste,
Where all the roarers of the north
Can neither storm, nor starve, us forth.

39

There under ground a magazine
Of sovran juice is cellar'd in,
Liquor that will the siege maintain,
Should Phoebus ne'er return again.

40

'Tis that, that gives the poet rage,
And thaws the gelly'd blood of age,
Matures the young, restores the old,
And makes the fainting coward bold.

41

It lays the careful head to rest,
Calms palpitations in the breast,
Renders our live's misfortunes sweet,
And Venus frolic in the sheet.

42

Then let the chill Scirocco blow,
And gird us round with hills of snow,
Or else go whistle to the shore,
And make the hollow mountains roar.

43

Whilst we together jovial sit,
Careless, and crown'd with mirth and wit,
Where tho' bleak winds confine us home,
Our fancies thro' the world shall roam.

44

We'll think of all the friends we know,
And drink to all, worth drinking to;
When, having drunk all thine and mine,
We rather shall want health than wine!

45

But, where friends fail us, we'll supply
Our friendships with our Charity.
Men that remote in sorrows live,
Shall by our lusty bumpers thrive.

46

We'll drink the wanting into wealth,
And those that languish into health,
Th' afflicted into joy, th' opprest
Into security & rest.

47

The worthy in disgrace shall find
Favour return again more kind,
And in restraint who stifled lye,
Shall taste the air of liberty.

48

The brave shall triumph in success,
The lovers shall have mistresses,
Poor unregarded virtue praise,
And the neglected Poet bays.

49

Thus shall our healths do others good,
While we ourselves do all we wou'd,
For freed from envy, and from care,
What would we be, but what we are?

50

'Tis the plump Grape's immortal juice,
That does this happiness produce,
And will preserve us free together,
Maugre mischance, or wind, & weather.

51

Then let old winter take his course,
 And roar abroad till he be hoarse,
 And his lungs crack with ruthless ire,
 It shall but serve to blow our fire.

52

Let him our little castle ply
 With all his loud artillery,
 Whilst sack and claret man the fort,
 His fury shall become our sport.

53

Or let him Scotland take, and there
 Confine the plotting Presbyterian;
 His zeal may freeze, whilst we kept warm
 With love and wine can know no harm.

How could Burns miss the series of lines from 42 to 49?

There is also a long poem from the Latin on the inconveniences of old age. I can't set down the whole, tho' right worthy, having dedicated the remainder of my sheet to something else. I just excerpt here and there, to convince you, if after this you need it, that Cotton was a first rate. Tis old Gallus speaks of himself, once the delight of the Ladies and Gallants of Rome:—

The beauty of my shape & face are fled,
 And my revolted form bespeaks me dead,
 For fair, and shining age, has now put on
 A bloodless, funeral complexion.
 My skin's dry'd up, my nerves unpliant are,
 And my poor limbs my nails plow up and tear.
 My chearful eyes now with a constant spring
 Of tears bewail their own sad suffering;
 And those soft lids, that once secured my eye
 Now rude, and bristled grown, do drooping lie,
 Bolting mine eyes, as in a gloomy cave,
 Which there on furies, and grim objects, rave.
 'Twould fright the full-blown Gallant to behold
 The dying object of a man so old.
 And can you think, that once a man he was,
 Of human reason who no portion has.
 The letters split, when I consult my book,
 And every leaf I turn does broader look.
 In darkness do I dream I see the light,
 When light is darkness to my perishd sight.

* * * * *

Is it not hard we may not from men's eyes
 Cloak and conceal Age's indecencies?
 Unseemingly spruceness th' old man discommends,
 And in old men, only to live, offends.

* * * * *

How can I him a living man believe,
 Whom light, and air, by whom he panteth, grieve;
 The gentle sleeps, which other mortals ease,
 Scarce in a winter's night my eyelids seize.

* * * * *

The boys and girls, deride me now forlorn,
 And but to call me, Sir, now think it scorn,
 They jeer my countenance, and my feeble pace,
 And scoff that nodding head, that awful was.

* * * * *

A song written by Cowper, which in style is much above his usual, and emulates in noble plainness any old ballad I have seen. Hayley has just published it &c. with a Life. I did not think Cowper *up* to it:—

SONG ON THE LOSS OF THE ROYAL GEORGE

I

Toll for the Brave!
 The Brave, that are no more!
 All sunk beneath the wave,
 Fast by their native shore.—

2

Eight hundred of the Brave,
 Whose courage well was tried,
 Had made the vessel heel,
 And laid her on her side.

3

A Land breeze shook the shrouds,
 And she was over set;
 Down went the Royal George,
 With all her sails complete.

4

Toll for the Brave!
 Brave Kempenfelt is gone:
 His last sea-fight is fought;
 His work of glory done.

5

It was not in the battle,
 No tempest gave the shock;
 She sprang no fatal leak;
 She ran upon no rock.

6

His sword was in its sheath;
 His fingers held the pen,
 When Kempenfelt went down,
 With twice four hundred men.

7

Weigh the vessel up!
 Once dreaded by our foes!
 And mingle with the cup,
 The tear that England owes.

8

Her timbers yet are sound,
 And she may float again,
 Full charg'd with England's thunder,
 And plow the distant main.

9

But Kempenfelt is gone,
 His victories are o'er;
 And he, and his eight hundred,
 Shall plow the wave no more.

In your obscure part of the world, which I take to be Ultima Thule, I thought these verses out of Books which cannot be accessible would not be unwelcome. Having room, I will put in an Epitaph I writ for a *real occasion*, a year or two back.

ON MARY DRUIT WHO DIED AGED 19

Under this cold marble stone
 Sleep the sad remains of One,
 Who, when alive, by few or none

2

Was lov'd, as lov'd she might have been,
 If she prosp'rous days had seen,
 Or had thriving been, I ween.

3
Only this cold funeral stone
Tells, she was below'd by One,
Who on the marble graves his moan.

I conclude with Love to your Sister and Mrs. W.
Yours affectvly,

C. LAMB.

Mary sends Love, &c.

On consulting Mary, I find it will be foolish inserting the Note as I intended, being so small, and as it is possible you *may* have to *trouble* us again e'er long; so it shall remain to be settled hereafter. However, the verses shan't be lost.

N.B.—All orders executed with fidelity and punctuality by C. & M. Lamb.

[*On the outside is written :*] I beg to open this for a minute to add my remembrances to you all, and to assure you I shall ever be happy to hear from or see, much more to be useful to any of my old friends at Grasmere.

J. STODDART.

A *lean* paragraph of the Doctor's.

C. LAMB.

[Charles Cotton (1630-87). Wordsworth praises the poem on Winter in his preface to the 1815 edition of his works, and elsewhere sets up a comparison between the character of Cotton and that of Burns.

Hayley's *Life of Cowper* appeared first in 1803.

'The Doctor.' Stoddart, having taken his D.C.L., in 1801, was now called Dr. Stoddart.

Rickman tells Southey that on 29th March Lamb called on him in tears to say that his sister had been again taken ill. On that night Lamb slept at Rickman's house.]

139. TO S. T. COLERIDGE

[P.M. 13th April 1803.]

MY DEAR COLERIDGE,

Things have gone on better with me since you left me. I expect to have my old housekeeper home again in a week or two. She has mended most rapidly. My health too has been better since you took away that Montero cap. I have left off cayenned

eggs and such bolsters to discomfort. There was death in that cap. I mischievously wished that by some inauspicious jolt the whole contents might be shaken, and the coach set on fire. For you said they had that property. How the old Gentleman, who joined you at Grantham, would have clapp't his hands to his knees, and not knowing but it was an immediate visitation of God that burnt him, how pious it would have made him; him, I mean, that brought the Influenza with him, and only took places for one—a damn'd old sinner, he must have known what he had got with him! However, I wish the cap no harm for the sake of the *head it fits*, and could be content to see it disfigure my healthy side-board again. [*Here is a paragraph erased.*]

What do you think of smoking? I want your sober, *average noon opinion* of it. I generally am eating my dinner about the time I should determine it. [*Another small erasure.*]

Morning is a Girl, and can't smoke—she's no evidence one way or other; and Night is so evidently *bought over*, that *he* can't be a very upright Judge. May be the truth is, that *one* pipe is wholesome, *two* pipes toothsome, *three* pipes noisome, *four* pipes fulsome, *five* pipes quarrelsome; and that's the *sum* on't. But that is deciding rather upon rhyme than reason. . . . After all, our instincts *may* be best. Wine, I am sure, good, mellow, generous Port, can hurt nobody, unless they take it to excess, which they may easily avoid if they observe the rules of temperance.

Bless you, old Sophist, who next to Human Nature taught me all the corruption I was capable of knowing—And bless your Montero Cap, and your trail (which shall come after you whenever you appoint), and your wife and children—Pi-pos especially.

When shall we two smoke again? Last night I had been in a sad quandary of spirits, in what they call the evening; but a pipe and some generous Port, and King Lear (being alone), had its effects as a remonstrance. I went to bed pot-valiant. By the way, may not the Ogles of Somersetshire be remotely descended from King Lear?

Love to Sara, and ask her what gown she means that Mary has got of hers. I know of none but what went with Miss Wordsworth's things to Wordsworth, and was paid for out of their money. I allude to a part which I may have read imperfectly in a letter of hers to you.

C. L.

[Coleridge had been in London early in April and had stayed with Lamb at 16 Mitre Court Buildings. From the following letter to his wife, dated 4th April, we get light on Lamb's allusion to his 'old housekeeper,' i.e. Mary Lamb, and her rapid mending:

I had purposed not to speak of Mary Lamb, but I had better write it than tell it. The Thursday before last she met at Rickman's a Mr. Babb, an old friend and admirer of her mother. The next day she *smiled* in an ominous way; on Sunday she told her brother that she was getting bad, with great agony. On Tuesday morning [29th March] she laid hold of me with violent agitation and talked wildly about George Dyer. I told Charles there was not a moment to lose; and I did not lose a moment, but went for a hackney-coach and took her to the private mad-house at Hugsden. She was quite calm, and said it was the best to do so. But she wept bitterly two or three times, yet all in a calm way. Charles is cut to the heart.

Lamb's first articulate doubts as to smoking are expressed in this letter. One may perhaps take in this connection the passage on tobacco and alcohol in the *Confessions of a Drunkard*.

'Montero cap.' A recollection of *Tristram Shandy*.

The Ogles and King Lear (i.e. leer)—merely a pun.]

140. TO S. T. COLERIDGE

[P.M. 20th May 1803.]

Mary sends love from home.

DR. C.,

I do confess that I have not sent your books as I ought to be [have] done; but you know how the human freewill is tethered, and that we perform promises to ourselves no better than to our friends. A watch is come for you. Do you want it soon, or shall I wait till some one travels your way? You, like me, I suppose, reckon the lapse of time from the waste thereof, as boys let a cock run to waste: too idle to stop it, and rather amused with seeing it dribble. Your poems have begun printing; Longman sent to me to arrange them, the old and the new together. It seems you have left it to him. So I classed them, as nearly as I could, according to dates. First, after the Dedication, (which must march first) and which I have transplanted from before the Preface (which stood like a dead wall of prose between) to be the first poem—then comes 'The Pixies,' and the things most juvenile—then on 'To Chatterton,' &c.—on, lastly, to the 'Ode on the Departing Year,' and 'Musings,'—which finish. Long-

man wanted the Ode first; but the arrangement I have made is precisely that marked out in the dedication, following the order of time. I told L. I was sure that you would omit a good portion of the first edition. I instanced several sonnets, &c.—but that was not his plan, and, as you have done nothing in it, all I could do was to arrange 'em on the supposition that all were to be retained. A few I positively rejected; such as that of 'The Thimble,' and that of 'Flicker and Flicker's wife,' and that *not* in the manner of Spenser, which you yourself had stigmatised—and the 'Man of Ross,'—I doubt whether I should this last. It is not too late to save it. The first proof is only just come. I have been forced to call that Cupid's Elixir 'Kisses.' It stands in your first volume as an Effusion, so that, instead of prefixing The Kiss to that of 'One Kiss, dear Maid,' &c., I have ventured to entitle it 'To Sara.' I am aware of the nicety of changing even so mere a trifle as a title to so short a piece, and subverting old associations; but two called 'Kisses' would have been absolutely ludicrous, and 'Effusion' is no name; and these poems come close together. I promise you not to alter one word in any poem whatever, but to take your last text, where two are. Can you send any wishes about the book? Longman, I think, should have settled with you. But it seems you have left it to him. Write as soon as you possibly can; for, without making myself responsible, I feel myself in some sort accessory to the selection which I am to proof-correct. But I decidedly said to Biggs that I was sure you would omit more. Those I have positively rubbed off I can swear to *individually*, (except the 'Man of Ross,' which is too familiar in Pope,) but no others—you have your cue. For my part, I had rather all the *Juvenilia* were kept—*memoria causâ*.

Rob Lloyd has written me a masterly letter, containing a character of his father;—see, how different from Charles he views the old man! *Literatim* 'My father smokes, repeats Homer in Greek, and Virgil, and is learning, when from business, with all the vigour of a young man Italian. He is really a wonderful man. He mixes public and private business, the intricacies of discording life with his religion and devotion. No one more rationally enjoys the romantic scenes of nature, and the chit-chat and little vagaries of his children; and, though surrounded with an ocean of affairs, the very neatness of his most obscure cupboard

in the house passes not unnoticed. I never knew any one view with such clearness, nor so well satisfied with things as they are, and make such allowance for things which must appear perfect Syriac to him.' By the last he means the Lloydisms of the younger branches. His portrait of Charles (exact as far as he has had opportunities of noting him) is most exquisite. 'Charles is become steady as a church, and as straightforward as a Roman road. It would distract him to mention anything that was not as plain as sense; he seems to have run the whole scenery of life, AND NOW RESTS AS THE FORMAL PRECISIAN OF NON-EXISTENCE.' Here is genius I think, and 'tis seldom a young man, a Lloyd, looks at a father (so differing) with such good nature while he is alive. Write—

I am in post-haste,

C. LAMB.

Love, &c., to Sara, P., and H.

[*Poems*, by S. T. Coleridge, third edition, was now in preparation by Longman & Rees. Lamb saw the volume through the press. The 1797 second edition was followed, except that Lloyd's and Lamb's contributions were omitted, together with the following poems by Coleridge: *To the Rev. W. J. H., Sonnet to Koskiusko, Written after a Walk* (which Lamb inaccurately called *Flicker and Flicker's Wife*), *From a Young Lady (The Silver Thimble)*, *On the Christening of a Friend's Child*, *Introductory Sonnet to Lloyd's 'Poems on the Death of Priscilla Farmer.'* *The Man of Ross* (whom Pope also celebrates in the *Moral Essays*, iii. lines 250–90) was retained, and also the *Lines in the Manner of Spenser*. The piece rechristened *Kisses* had been called *The Composition of a Kiss*. Biggs was the printer. See also the next letter.]

141. TO S. T. COLERIDGE

Saturday, 27th May, 1803.

MY DEAR COLERIDGE,

The date of my last was one day prior to the receipt of your letter, full of foul omens. I explain, lest you should have thought mine too light a reply to such sad matter. I seriously hope by this time you have given up all thoughts of journeying to the green islands of the Blest—voyages in time of war are very precarious—or at least, that you will take them in your way to the Azores. Pray be careful of this letter till it has done its duty, for it is to inform you that I have booked off your watch

(laid in cotton like an untimely fruit), and with it Condillac and all other books of yours which were left here. These set out on Monday next, the 29th May, by Kendal waggon, from White Horse, Cripplegate. You will make seasonable inquiries, for a watch mayn't come your way again in a hurry.

I have been repeatedly after Tobin, and now hear that he is in the country, not to return till middle of June. I will take care and see him with the earliest. But cannot you write pathetically to him, enforcing a speedy mission of your books for literary purposes? He is too good a retainer to Literature, to let her interests suffer through his default. And why, in the name of Beelzebub, are your books to travel from Barnard's Inn to the Temple, and then circuitously to Cripplegate, when their business is to take a short cut down Holborn-hill, up Snow do., on to Wood-street, &c.? The former mode seems a sad superstitious sub-division of labour. Well! the 'Man of Ross' is to stand; Longman begs for it; the printer stands with a wet sheet in one hand and a useless Pica in the other, in tears, pleading for it; I relent. Besides, it was a Salutation poem, and has the mark of the beast 'Tobacco' upon it. Thus much I have done; I have swept off the lines about *widows* and *orphans* in second edition, which (if you remember) you most awkwardly and illogically caused to be inserted between two *Ifs*, to the great breach and disunion of said *Ifs*, which now meet again (as in first edition), like two clever lawyers arguing a case. Another reason for subtracting the pathos was, that the 'Man of Ross' is too familiar to need telling what he did, especially in worse lines than Pope told it; and it now stands simply as 'Reflections at an Inn about a known Character,' and sucking an old story into an accommodation with present feelings. Here is no breaking spears with Pope, but a new, independent, and really a very pretty poem. In fact, 'tis as I used to admire it in the first volume, and I have even dared to restore

for If 'neath this roof thy wine-cheer'd moments pass,

 Beneath this roof if thy cheer'd moments pass.

'Cheer'd' is a sad general word; 'wine-cheer'd' I'm sure you'd give me, if I had a speaking-trumpet to sound to you 300 miles.

But I am your factotum, and that (save in this instance, which is a single case, and I can't get at you) shall be next to a fac-nihil—at most, a fac-simile. I have ordered 'Imitation of Spenser' to be restored on Wordsworth's authority; and now, all that you will miss will be 'Flicker and Flicker's Wife,' 'The Thimble,' 'Breathe, *dear harmonist*,' and, *I believe*, 'The Child that was fed with Manna.' Another volume will clear off all your Anthologic Morning-Postian Epistolary Miscellanies; but pray don't put 'Christabel' therein; don't let that sweet maid come forth attended with Lady Holland's mob at her heels. Let there be a separate volume of Tales, Choice Tales, 'Ancient Mariners,' &c.

C. LAMB.

Word of your health will be richly acceptable.

[Coleridge, who was getting more and more nervous about his health, had long been on the point of starting on some southern travels with Thomas Wedgwood, but Wedgwood had gone alone; his friend James Webbe Tobin, mentioned later in the letter, lived at Nevis, in the West Indies: possibly Coleridge had thoughts of returning with him. The Malta experiment, of which we are to hear later, had not, I think, yet been mooted.]

The Man of Ross. In the 1797 edition the poem had run thus, partly by Lamb's advice (see the letters of 10th June 1796, and 5th February 1797):

LINES WRITTEN AT THE KING'S-ARMS, ROSS, FORMERLY
THE HOUSE OF THE 'MAN OF ROSS'

Richer than MISER o'er his countless hoards,
Nobler than KINGS, or king-polluted LORDS,
Here dwelt the MAN OF ROSS! I Trav'ller, hear!
Departed Merit claims a reverent tear.
Friend to the friendless, to the sick man health,
With generous joy he view'd his modest wealth;
He hears the widow's heaven-breath'd prayer of praise,
He marks the shelter'd orphan's tearful gaze,
Or where the sorrow-shrivell'd captive lay,
Pours the bright blaze of Freedom's noon-tide ray.
Beneath this roof if thy cheer'd moments pass,
Fill to the good man's name one grateful glass:
To higher zest shall MEM'RY wake thy soul,
And VIRTUE mingle in th' ennobled bowl.
But if, like me, thro' life's distressful scene
Lonely and sad thy pilgrimage hath been;
And if, thy breast with heart-sick anguish fraught,
Thou journeyest onward tempest-tost in thought;

Here cheat thy cares! in generous visions melt,
And dream of Goodness, thou hast never felt!

Lamb changed it by omitting lines 9 to 14, Coleridge agreeing. The poet would not, however, restore 'wine-cheer'd' as in his earliest version, 1794. In the edition of 1828 the six lines were put back. *Breathe, dear Harmonist* was the poem *To the Rev. W. J. H.*, and *The Child that was fed with Manna* was *On the Christening of a Friend's Child*.

'Lady Holland's mob.' This was the name given to a gang of roughs who assembled every year at Smithfield on the night before Bartholomew Fair opened, and engaged in lawlessness. See Hone's *Every-Day Book I* for 3rd September.

The reference to *Christabel* helps to controvert Fanny Godwin's remark in a letter to Mrs. Shelley, on 20th July 1816, that Lamb 'says *Christabel* ought never to have been published; that no one understood it.'

142. TO S. T. COLERIDGE

[No date: ? June 1803.]

By some fatality, unusual with me, I have mislaid the list of books which you want. Can you, from memory, easily supply me with another?

I confess to Statius, and I detained him wilfully, out of a reverent regard to your style. Statius, they tell me, is turgid. As to that other Latin book, since you know neither its name nor subject, your wants (I crave leave to apprehend) cannot be very urgent. Meanwhile, dream that it is one of the lost Decades of Livy.

Your partiality to me has led you to form an erroneous opinion as to the measure of delight you suppose me to take in obliging. Pray, be careful that it spread no further. 'Tis one of those heresies that is very pregnant. Pray, rest more satisfied with the portion of learning which you have got, and disturb my peaceful ignorance as little as possible with such sort of commissions.

Did you never observe an appearance well known by the name of the man in the moon? Some scandalous old maids have set on foot a report that it is Endymion. Dr. Stoddart talks of going out King's Advocate to Malta. He has studied the Civil and Canon Law just three canon months, to my knowledge. *Fiat justitia, ruat cælum.*

Your theory about the first awkward step a man makes being the consequence of learning to dance, is not universal. We have known many youths bred up at Christ's, who never learned to dance, yet the world imputes to them no very graceful motions. I remember there was little Hudson, the immortal precentor of St. Paul's, to teach us our quavers: but, to the best of my recollection, there was no master of motions when we were at Christ's.

Farewell, in haste.

C. L.

['Your theory . . .'] This may have been contained in one of Coleridge's letters, now lost; I do not find it in any of the known *Morning Post* articles.

'Little Hudson.' Robert Hudson, Mus.B., who composed the music for James Boyer's Easter anthems for the Christ's Hospitallers to sing.

We now come to the first of Mary Lamb's letters, of which, fortunately, many have been preserved. Although lacking her brother's fancy and quickness of intelligence, she was a carefully informative and sympathetic correspondent.]

143. MARY LAMB TO DOROTHY WORDSWORTH

[Dated at end: 9th July. P.M. 11th July 1803.]

MY DEAR MISS WORDSWORTH,

We rejoice with exceeding great joy to hear the delightful tidings you were so *very* kind to remember to send us—I hope your dear sister is perfectly well, and makes an excellent nurse. Are you not now the happiest family in the world?

I have been in better health and spirits this week past than since my last illness—I continued so long so very weak & dejected I began to fear I should never be at all comfortable again. I strive against low spirits all I can, but it is a very hard thing to get the better of.

I am very uneasy about poor Coleridge, his last letters are very melancholy ones. Remember me affectionately to him and Sara. I hope you often see him.

Southey is in town. He seems as proud of his little girl as I suppose your brother is of his boy; he says his home is now quite a different place to what it used to be. I was glad to hear him say this—it used to look rather cheerless.

We went last week with Southey and Rickman and his sister to Sadlers Wells, the lowest and most London-like of all our London amusements—the entertainments were Goody Two Shoes, Jack the Giant Killer, and *Mary of Buttermere*! Poor Mary was very happily married at the end of the piece, to a sailor her former sweetheart. We had a prodigious fine view of her father's house in the vale of Buttermere—mountains very like large haycocks, and a lake like nothing at all. If you had been with us, would you have laughed the whole time like Charles and Miss Rickman or gone to sleep as Southey and Rickman did?

Stoddart is in expectation of going soon to Malta as Judge Advocate; it is likely to be a profitable situation, fifteen hundred a year or more. If he goes he takes with him his sister, and, as I hear from her as a very great secret, a *wife*; you must not mention this because if he stays in England he may not be rich enough to marry for some years. I do not know why I should trouble you with a secret which it seems I am unable to keep myself and which is of no importance to you to hear; if he succeeds in this appointment he will be in a great bustle, for he must set out to Malta in a month. In the mean time he must go to Scotland to marry and fetch his wife, and it is a match against her parents' consent, and they as yet know nothing of the Malta expedition; so that he expects many difficulties, but the young lady and he are determined to conquer them. He then must go to Salisbury to take leave of his father and mother, who I pity very much, for they are old people and therefore are not very likely ever to see their children again.

Charles is very well and very good—I mean very sober, but he is very good in every sense of the word, for he has been very kind and patient with me and I have been a sad trouble to him lately. He has shut out all his friends because he thought company hurt me, and done every thing in his power to comfort and amuse me. We are to go out of town soon for a few weeks, when I hope I shall get quite stout and lively.

You saw Fenwick when you was with us—perhaps you remember his wife and children were with his brother, a tradesman at Penzance. He (the brother), who was supposed to be in a great way of business, has become a bankrupt; they are now at Penzance without a home and without money; and poor Fenwick,

who has been Editor of a country newspaper lately, is likely soon to be quite out of employ; I am distressed for them, for I have a great affection for Mrs. Fenwick.

How pleasant your little house and orchard must be now. I almost wish I had never seen it. I am always wishing to be with you. I could sit upon that little bench in idleness day long. When you have a leisure hour, a letter from [you], kind friend, will give me the greatest pleasure.

We have money of yours and I want you to send me some commission to lay it out. Are you not in want of anything? I believe when we go out of town it will be to Margate—I love the seaside and expect much benefit from it, but your mountain scenery has spoiled us. We shall find the flat country of the Isle of Thanet very dull.

Charles joins me in love to your brother and sister and the little John. I hope you are building more rooms. Charles said I was so long answering your letter Mrs. Wordsworth would have another little one before you received it. Our love and compliments to our kind Molly, I hope she grows younger and happier every day. When, and where, shall I ever see you again? Not I fear for a very long time, you are too happy ever to wish to come to London. When you write tell me how poor Mrs. Clarkson does.

God bless you and yours.

I am your affectionate friend,

July 9th.

M. LAMB.

[Wordsworth's eldest child, John, was born on 18th June 1803. Southey's little girl was Edith, born in September of the preceding year. It was Southey who made the charming remark that no house was complete unless it had in it a child rising six years, and a kitten rising six months.

Coleridge had been ill for some weeks after his visit to London. He was about to visit Scotland with the Wordsworths.

Mary of Buttermere was Mary Robinson, the Beauty of Buttermere, whom the swindler, John Hatfield, had married in October 1802, under the false name of Hope. Mary was the daughter of the landlord of the Fish Inn at Buttermere, and was famous in the Lake Country for her charm. Coleridge sent to the *Morning Post* in October some letters on the imposture, and Mary's name became a household word. Hatfield was hanged in September 1803. Funds were meanwhile raised for Mary, and she ultimately married a farmer, after being the subject of dramas, ballads, and novels.

The play which the Lambs saw was by Charles Dibdin the Younger, produced on 11th April 1803. Its title was *Edward and Susan ; or, The Beauty of Buttermere*. A benefit performance for the real Beauty of Buttermere was promised. Both Grimaldi and Belzoni were among the evening's entertainers.

Stoddart was the King's and the Admiralty's Advocate at Malta from 1803 to 1807. He married Isabella Moncrieff in 1803. His sister was Sarah Stoddart, of whom we are about to hear much.

According to Letter 145 the Lambs went not to Margate, but to the Isle of Wight—to Cowes, with the Burneys.

Molly was an old cottager at Grasmere whom the Lambs had been friendly with on their northern visit.

Mrs. Clarkson, the wife of Thomas Clarkson, was Catherine Buck. She survived her husband, who died in 1846.]

144. CHARLES LAMB TO JOHN RICKMAN

[Dated at end: *Saturday Morning, 16th July, 1803.*]

DEAR RICKMAN,

I enclose you a wonder, a letter from the shades. A dead body wants to return, and be inrolled *inter vivos*. 'Tis a gentle ghost, and in this Galvanic age it may have a chance.

Mary and I are setting out for the Isle of Wight. We make but a short stay, and shall pass the time betwixt that place and Portsmouth, where Fenwick is. I sadly wanted to explore the Peak this Summer; but Mary is against steering without card or compass, and we should be at large in Darbyshire.

We shall be at home this night and to-morrow, if you can come and take a farewell pipe.

I regularly transmitted your Notices to the *Morning Post*, but they have not been duly honoured. The fault lay not in me.—

Yours truly,

C. LAMB.

[Mr. Orlo Williams, in his *Life and Letters of John Rickman*, 1912, says of this letter: 'I think its date, together with the contents of letters from Southey and Rickman, proves it conclusively to refer to a kind of circular sent by George Burnett to his friends, announcing his return to the paths of reason and expressing regret for former aberrations, together with a desire for work.']

145. TO JOHN RICKMAN

(A joint letter from Captain Burney and Charles Lamb)

July 27, 1803.

DEAR RICKMAN,

We are at Cowes the whole flock, Sheep and Lambs—and in good pasturage—for notwithstanding that I joined, or rather acquiesced, in your dispraise of Cowes, in a dry summer like this it is a very pleasant place. We were much harassed by hot travelling and uncertainties till we fixed at this haven; and now I could feel myself thoroughly well disposed to indulge in a week of compleat idleness, if my senses were not invaded by the din of preparation, and the account which every day's paper brings of the universal bustle that prevails everywhere.

We purpose however to stay here one week longer reckoning from this date, and then to return to the defence of the Capital after so well having guarded the sea coast. We have visited Newport and Carisbrook Castle where we saw a deep well and a cross old woman. We went by water, and friend Lamb (to give a specimen of his Seamanship) very ingeniously and unconsciously cast loose the fastenings of the mast, so that mast, sprit, sails, and all the rest tumbled overboard with a crash, and not less to his surprise than to the surprise of every other person in the boat. I doubt whether any of us will muster up sufficient activity to go to the South part of the Island. We do everything that is idle, such as reading books from a circulating library, sauntering, hunting little crabs among the rocks, reading Church yard poetry which is as bad at Cowes as any Church yard in the Kingdom can produce. Miss Lamb is the only person among us who is not idle. All the cares she takes into her keeping. At night however we do a little business in the smoking line, and Martin endeavours to make Conundrums, but alas! he is not equal to the achievement. Such is the edifying life we lead at the Isle of Wight. Let us know how you take care of the Capital. An old sea saying is, 'Give a sprat to catch a Mackarel,' so pray send us your Mackarel and accept this sprat.

[*Lamb's part begins here*]

I testify that this is a pretty good outline of our doings, but the filling it up requires the hand of a Master. A volume might be made of Martin's blunders which parental tenderness omits. Such as his letting the packet-boat's boat go without him from the quay at Southampton, while he stood hiatusing, smit with the love of a Naiad; his tumbling back over a stone twice the height of himself, and daubing himself; his getting up to bathe at six o'clock, and forgetting it, and in consequence staying in his room in a process of annihilation, etc., etc., then the time expended in *Martin being scolded* would serve as great a sinner as Judas to repent in. In short nothing in this house goes right till after supper, then a gentle circumambience of the weed serves to shut out Isle of Wight impertinent scenery and brings us back in fancy to Mutton Lane and the romantic alleys ever green of nether-Holborn, green that owes nothing to grass, but the simple effect of cabbage-water, tripe-cauls, children's st—ls, etc. The fact of my setting the mast upside down is partly true. Indeed it was never properly nailed down, or the accident could not have happened.—Capt. Burney does nothing but teach his children bad habits. He surfeits them with cherries and black currants till they can eat no supper and then claps down the fruit expended to the common stock, and deducts what the surfeit saves from his part. There's a little girl he's brought with him that has cost I don't know what in codlings.—No ordinary orchard would be a jointure for her. Had all her sex been proportionate devourers of apples, God would have saved by keeping them in Paradise.—To add to our difficulties Martin has brought down a Terence, which he renders out loud into canine Latin at Breakfast and other meals, till the eyes of the infatuated Parent let slip water for joy, and the ears of every body beside shed their wax for being tired. More I could add but it is unsafe.

From the White Isle (date unknown).

C. L.

[We have here the first reference to Martin Charles Burney, the captain's son, to whom fifteen years later Lamb was to dedicate his *Works* in a beautiful sonnet of appreciation. We shall meet with Martin from time to time throughout the book.]

146. MARY LAMB TO SARAH STODDART

[Dated at end: 21st September 1803.]

MY DEAR SARAH,

I returned home from my visit yesterday, and was much pleased to find your letter; for I have been very anxious to hear how you are going on. I could hardly help expecting to see you when I came in; yet, though I should have rejoiced to have seen your merry face again, I believe it was better as it was—upon the whole; and, all things considered, it is certainly better you should go to Malta. The terms you are upon with your Lover does (as you say it will) appear wondrous strange to me; however, as I cannot enter into your feelings, I certainly can have nothing to say to it, only that I sincerely wish you happy in your own way, however odd that way may appear to me to be. I would begin now to advise you to drop all correspondence with William; but, as I said before, as I cannot enter into your feelings and views of things, *your ways not being my ways*, why should I tell you what I would do in your situation? So, child, take thy own ways, and God prosper thee in them!

One thing my advising spirit must say—use as little *Secrecy* as possible; and, as much as possible, make a friend of your sister-in-law—you know I was not struck with her at first sight; but, upon your account, I have watched and marked her very attentively; and, while she was eating a bit of cold mutton in our kitchen, we had a serious conversation. From the frankness of her manner, I am convinced she is a person I could make a friend of; why should not you? We talked freely about you: she seems to have a just notion of your character, and will be fond of you, if you will let her.

My father had a sister lived with us—of course, lived with my Mother, her sister-in-law; they were, in their different ways, the best creatures in the world—but they set out wrong at first. They made each other miserable for full twenty years of their lives—my Mother was a perfect gentlewoman, my Aunt as unlike a gentlewoman as you can possibly imagine a good old woman to be; so that my dear Mother (who, though you do not know it, is always in my poor head and heart) used to distress and weary her with incessant and unceasing attention and polite-

ness, to gain her affection. The old woman could not return this in kind, and did not know what to make of it—thought it all deceit, and used to hate my Mother with a bitter hatred; which, of course, was soon returned with interest. A little frankness, and looking into each other's characters at first, would have spared all this, and they would have lived, as they died, fond of each other for the last few years of their life. When we grew up, and harmonised them a little, they sincerely loved each other.

My Aunt and my Mother were wholly unlike you and your sister, yet in some degree theirs is the secret history I believe of all sisters-in-law—and you will smile when I tell you I think myself the only woman in the world who could live with a brother's wife, and make a real friend of her, partly from early observation of the unhappy example I have just given you, and partly from a knack I know I have of looking into people's real characters, and never expecting them to act out of it—never expecting another to do as I would in the same case. When you leave your Mother, and say, if you never shall see her again, you shall feel no remorse, and when you make a *jewish* bargain with your *Lover*, all this gives me no offence, because it is your nature, and your temper, and I do not expect or want you to be otherwise than you are. I love you for the good that is in you, and look for no change.

But, certainly, you ought to struggle with the evil that does most easily beset you—a total want of politeness in behaviour, I would say modesty of behaviour, but that I should not convey to you my idea of the word modesty; for I certainly do not mean that you want *real modesty*; and what is usually called false, or mock, modesty is [a quality] I certainly do not wish you to possess; yet I trust you know what I mean well enough.

Secrecy, though you appear all frankness, is certainly a grand failing of yours; it is likewise your *brother's*, and, therefore, a family failing—by secrecy, I mean you both want the habit of telling each other at the moment every thing that happens—where you go,—and what you do,—the free communication of letters and opinions just as they arrive, as Charles and I do,—and which is, after all, the only groundwork of friendship. Your brother, I will answer for [it,] will never tell his wife or his sister all that [is in] his mind—he will receive letters, and not

[mention it]. This is a fault Mrs. Stoddart can never [tell him of;] but she can, and will, feel it: though, [on] the whole, and in every other respect, she is [very] happy with him. Begin, for God's sake, at the first, and tell her every thing that passes. At first she may hear you with indifference; but in time this will gain her affection and confidence; show her all your letters (no matter if she does not show hers)—it is a pleasant thing for a friend to put into one's hand a letter just fresh from the post. I would even say, begin with showing her this, but that it is written freely and loosely, and some apology ought to be made for it—which I know not how to make, for I must write freely or not at all.

If you do this, she will tell your brother, you will say; and what then, quotha? It will beget a freer communication amongst you, which is a thing devoutly to be wished—

God bless you, and grant you may preserve your integrity, and remain unmarried and penniless, and make William a good and a happy wife.

Your affectionate friend,

M. LAMB.

Charles is very unwell, and my head aches. He sends his love: mine, with my best wishes, to your brother and sister.

I hope I shall get another letter from you.

Wednesday, 21st September, 1803.

[Sarah Stoddart was the sister of Dr. John Stoddart, who had just been appointed the King's and the Admiralty's Advocate at Malta, whither Miss Stoddart followed him. Her lover of that moment was a Mr. Turner, and William was an earlier lover still. Her sister-in-law was Mrs. John Stoddart, *née* Isabella Moncrieff, whom her brother had only just married.

'My Mother.' This is the only reference to her mother in any of Mary Lamb's letters. The sister was Sarah Lamb, usually known as Aunt Hetty.]

147. CHARLES LAMB TO WILLIAM GODWIN

Nov. 8. 1803.

MY DEAR SIR,

I have been sitting down for three or four days successively to the review, which I so much wished to do well, and to your

satisfaction. But I can produce nothing but absolute flatness and nonsense. My health and spirits are so bad, and my nerves so irritable, that I am sure, if I persist, I shall teaze myself into a fever. You do not know how sore and weak a brain I have, or you would allow for many things in me which you set down for whims. I solemnly assure you that I never more wished to prove to you the value which I have for you than at this moment; but although in so seemingly trifling a service I cannot get through with it, I pray you to impute it to this one sole cause, ill health. I hope I am above subterfuge, and that you will do me this justice to think so.

You will give me great satisfaction by sealing my pardon and oblivion in a line or two, before I come to see you, or I shall be ashamed to come.—Your, with great truth,

C. LAMB.

[Lamb seems to have been endeavouring to review Godwin's *Life of Chaucer*. See next letter.]

148. TO WILLIAM GODWIN

Nov. 10, 1803.

DEAR GODWIN,

You never made a more unlucky and perverse mistake than to suppose that the reason of my not writing that cursed thing was to be found in your book. I assure you most sincerely that I have been greatly delighted with Chaucer. I may be wrong, but I think there is one considerable error runs through it, which is a conjecturing spirit, a fondness for filling out the picture by supposing what Chaucer did and how he felt, where the materials are scanty. So far from meaning to withhold from you (out of mistaken tenderness) this opinion of mine, I plainly told Mrs. Godwin that I did find a *fault*, which I should reserve naming until I should see you and talk it over. This she may very well remember, and also that I declined naming this fault until she drew it from me by asking me if there was not too much fancy in the work. I then confessed generally what I felt, but refused to go into particulars until I had seen you. I am never very fond of saying things before third persons, because in the relation

(such is human nature) something is sure to be dropped. If Mrs. Godwin has been the cause of your misconstruction, I am very angry, tell her; yet it is not an anger unto death. I remember also telling Mrs. G. (which she may have *dropt*) that I was by turns considerably more delighted than I expected. But I wished to reserve all this until I saw you. I even had conceived an expression to meet you with, which was thanking you for some of the most exquisite pieces of criticism I had ever read in my life. In particular, I should have brought forward that on 'Troilus and Cressida' and Shakespear which, it is little to say, delighted me, and instructed me (if not absolutely *instructed* me, yet put into *full-grown sense* many conceptions which had arisen in me before in my most discriminating moods). All these things I was preparing to say, and bottling them up till I came, thinking to please my friend and host, the author! when lo! this deadly blight intervened.

I certainly ought to make great allowances for your misunderstanding me. You, by long habits of composition and a greater command gained over your own powers, cannot conceive of the desultory and uncertain way in which I (an author by fits) sometimes cannot put the thoughts of a common letter into sane prose. Any work which I take upon myself as an engagement will act upon me to torment, *e.g.*, when I have undertaken, as three or four times I have, a school-boy copy of verses for Merchant Taylors' boys, at a guinea a copy, I have fretted over them, in perfect inability to do them, and have made my sister wretched with my wretchedness for a week together. The same, till by habit I have acquired a mechanical command, I have felt in making paragraphs. As to reviewing, in particular, my head is so whimsical a head, that I cannot, after reading another man's book, let it have been never so pleasing, give any account of it in any methodical way. I cannot follow his train. Something like this you must have perceived of me in conversation. Ten thousand times I have confessed to you, talking of my talents, my utter inability to remember in any comprehensive way what I read. I can vehemently applaud, or perversely stickle, at *parts*; but I cannot grasp at a whole. This infirmity (which is nothing to brag of) may be seen in my two little compositions, the tale and my play, in both which no reader, however partial, can find

any story. I wrote such stuff about Chaucer, and got into such digressions, quite irreducible into $1\frac{1}{2}$ column of a paper, that I was perfectly ashamed to show it you. However, it is become a serious matter that I should convince you I neither slunk from the task through a wilful deserting neglect, or through any (most imaginary on your part) distaste of Chaucer; and I will try my hand again, I hope with better luck. My health is bad and my time taken up, but all I can spare between this and Sunday shall be employed for you, since you desire it: and if I bring you a crude, wretched paper on Sunday, you must burn it, and forgive me; if it proves anything better than I predict, may it be a peace-offering of sweet incense between us. C. LAMB.

[Lamb's review of Godwin's *Life of Chaucer*, issued in October 1803, was never completed.]

Lamb's early Merchant Taylors' verses have been lost, but two epigrams that he wrote many years later for the sons of J. A. Hessey, the publisher of the *London Magazine*, have been preserved (see the letter to Southey, 10th May 1830).]

149. TO WILLIAM GODWIN

[No date: 1803.]

MY DEAR SIR,

I assure you positively that what I had begun to write about Chaucer was so inconsiderable that you could make no possible use of it. I have it not, and if I could recover it I should be extremely hurt to be obliged to show it you. I beg you to let the matter now rest, and unless you wish to tease and vex me, that you will not mention it again. I hoped that I had said enough before.

Yours truly,

C. LAMB.

[Perhaps may be placed here an undated scrap to Godwin, in which Lamb says he has been 'strangely hindered' in a work in hand. 'I set to it in earnest yesterday morning, and rap-rap came a knock and one of the Lloyds (whom you know I love) from Birmingham, and no more business could be done that day.']

150. TO THOMAS POOLE

[Dated at end: 14th February 1804.]

DEAR SIR,

I am sorry we have not been able to hear of lodgings to suit young F. but we will not desist in the enquiry. In a day or two something may turn up. Boarding houses are common enough, but to find a family where he would be safe from impositions within & impositions without is not so easy.—

I take this opportunity of thanking you for your kind attentions to the Lad I took the liberty of recommending. *His* mother was disposed to have taken in young F. but could not possibly make room.

Your obliged &c

C. LAMB.

Temple, 14 Feb., 1804.

[I do not know to what lads the note refers, but probably young F. was young Fricker, the brother of Mrs. Coleridge and Mrs. Southey. The note is interesting only as giving another instance of Lamb's willing helpfulness to others. Poole was one of Coleridge's patrons.]

151. CHARLES LAMB TO S. T. COLERIDGE

[P.M. 10th March 1804.]

DR. C.,

I blunderd open this letter, its weight making me conjecture it held an inclosure; but finding it poetry (which is no man's ground, but waste and common) I perused it. Do you remember that you are to come to us to-night?

C. L.

To Mr. Coleridge,
Mr. Tobin's,
Barnards Inn, Holborn.

[This is written on the back of a paper addressed (to save postage) to Mr. Lamb, India House, containing a long extract from *Madoc* in Southey's hand.

Coleridge, having been invited by Stoddart to Malta, was now in London on his way thither. Tobin was probably James Webbe Tobin, brother of John Tobin, the solicitor and dramatist.]

152. TO ROBERT LLOYD

Mar. 13, 1804.

DEAR ROBERT,

I received your notes safe, and thank you for them. It seems you are about to be married. Joy to you and uninterrupted satisfaction in that state. But who is the Lady? It is the character of your letters that you omit facts, dates, names, and matter, and describe nothing but feelings, in which, as I cannot always partake, as being more intense in degree or different in kind from my own tranquil ones, I cannot always well tell how to reply. Your dishes are too much sauced and spiced and flavoured for me to suppose that you can relish my plain meats and vulgar aliment. Still, Robert, if I cannot always send you of the same, they have a smack and a novelty, a Robert-ism about them, that make them a dainty stimulus to my palate at times. I have little to tell you of. You are mistaken, I am disengaged from all newspaper connexions, and breathe a freer air in consequence. I was bound, like Gulliver, in a multitude of little chains, which, by quotidian leasing swelled to a rack and a gibbet in the year's account. I am poorer but happier. Your three pounds came seasonably, but I doubt whether I am fairly entitled to them as a debt.

I am obliged to break off here, and would not send this unfinished, but that you might otherwise be uneasy about the moneys.

Am I ever to see you? for it is like letters to the dead, or for a friend to write to his friend in the Fortunate Isles, or the Moon, or at the Antipodes, to address a line to ONE in Warwickshire that I am never to see in London. I shall lose the very face of Robert by disuse, and I question, if I were a painter, if I could now paint it from memory.

I could tell you many things, but you are so spiritual and abstracted, that I fear to insult you with tidings of this world. But may your approaching husband-hood humanise you. I think I see a dawn. I am sure joy is rising upon you, and I stand a tiptoe to see the sun ascending till it gets up and up, and

'while a man tells the story,' shows at last a fair face and a full light.

God bless you, Robt.,

C. L.

Tuesday, March 13, 1804.

[Robert Lloyd married Hannah Hart (daughter of Francis Hart, banker, of Nottingham), on 2nd August 1804, in the Castle Dunnington Meeting House, Leicestershire. She was a Quakeress, and she proved to be a model wife.]

153. MARY LAMB TO SARAH STODDART

[No date: ? *March 1804.*]

MY DEAREST SARAH,

I will just write a few lines to say Coleridge is setting off sooner than we expected; and I every moment expect him to call in one of his great hurrys for this. Charles intended to write by him, but has not: most likely he will send a letter after him to Portsmouth: if he does, you will certainly hear from him soon. We rejoiced with exceeding joy to hear of your safe arrival: I hope your brother will return home in a few years a very rich man. Seventy pounds in one fortnight is a pretty beginning—

I envy your brother the pleasure of seeing Coleridge drop in unexpectedly upon him; we talk—but it is but wild and idle talk—of following him: he is to get my brother some little snug place of a thousand a year, and we are to leave all, and come and live among ye. What a pretty dream.

Coleridge is very ill. I dread the thought of his long voyage—write as soon as he arrives, whether he does or not, and tell me how he is.

'Jamaica bodies use him weel.'

He has got letters of recommendation to Governor Ball, and God knows who; and he will talk and talk, and be universally admired. But I wish to write for him a *letter of recommendation* to Mrs. Stoddart, and to yourself, to take upon ye, on his first arrival, to be kind affectionate nurses; and mind, now, that you perform this duty faithfully, and write me a good account of

yourself. Behave to him as you would to me, or to Charles, if we came sick and unhappy to you.

I have no news to send you; Coleridge will tell you how we are going on. Charles has lost the newspaper; but what we dreaded as an evil has proved a great blessing, for we have both strangely recovered our health and spirits since this has happened; and I hope, when I write next, I shall be able to tell you Charles has begun something which will produce a little money; for it is not well to be *very poor*—which we certainly are at this present writing.

I sit writing here, and thinking almost you will see it to-morrow; and what a long, long time it will be ere you receive this—When I saw your letter, I fancy'd you were even just then in the first bustle of a new reception, every moment seeing new faces, and staring at new objects, when, at that time, every thing had become familiar to you; and the strangers, your new dancing partners, had perhaps become gossiping fireside friends. You tell me of your gay, splendid doings; tell me, likewise, what manner of home-life you lead—Is a quiet evening in a Maltese drawing room as pleasant as those we have passed in Mitre Court and Bell yard?—Tell me all about it, every thing pleasant, and every thing unpleasant, that befalls you.

I want you to say a great deal about yourself. *Are you happy? and do you not repent going out?* I wish I could see you for one hour only.

Remember me affectionately to your sister and brother; and tell me, when you write, if Mrs. Stoddart likes Malta, and how the climate agrees with her and with thee.

We heard you were taken prisoners, and for several days believed the tale.

How did the pearls, and the fine court finery, bear the fatigues of the voyage, and how often have they been worn and admired?

Rickman wants to know if you are going to be married yet—satisfy him in that little particular when you write.

The Fenwicks send their love, and Mrs. Reynolds her love, and the little old lady her best respects.

Mrs. Jefferies, who I see now and then, talks of you with tears in her eyes, and, when she heard you was taken prisoner, Lord! how frightened she was. She has heard, she tells me, that Mr.

Stoddart is to have a pension of two thousand a year, whenever he chuses to return to England.

God bless you, and send you all manner of comforts and happinesses.

Your most affectionate friend,

MARY LAMB.

How-do? how-do? No time to write. S. T. C. going off in a great hurry.

CH. LAMB.

[Miss Stoddart was now in Malta. Governor Ball was Sir Alexander Ball, to whom Coleridge was to act as private secretary and of whom he wrote some years later in the *Friend*.

'Jamaica bodies . . .' Burns.

'We heard you were taken prisoners'—by the French.

'Mrs. Reynolds'—Lamb's old schoolmistress and pensioner. Mrs. Jefferies I do not know.]

154. CHARLES LAMB TO S. T. COLERIDGE

[P.M. 4th April 1804.]

Mary would send her best love, but I write at office.

Thursday [5th April].

The £1 came safe.

MY DEAR C.,

I but just received your commission-abounding letter. All shall be done. Make your European heart easy in Malta, all shall be performed. You say I am to transcribe off part of your letters and send to X somebody (but the name is lost under the wafer, so you must give it me)—I suppose Wordswth.

I have been out of town since Saturday, the reason I had not your letter before. N.B. N.B. Knowing I had 2 or 3 Easter holydays, it was my intention to have ask'd you if my accompanying you to Ports^m would have been pleasant. But you were not visible, except just at the critical moment of going off from the Inn, at which time I could not get at you. So Deus aliter disposuit, and I went down into Hertfordshire.

I write in great bustle indeed—God bless you again. Attend to what I have written mark'd X above, and don't merge any part of your Orders under seal again.

C. LAMB.

1804

THOMAS POOLE

[Addressed to 'S. T. Coleridge, Esq^r., J. C. Mottley's, Esq^r., Portsmouth, Hants.']

Coleridge had left London for Portsmouth on 27th March; he sailed for Malta on 9th April.]

155. TO THOMAS POOLE

[Dated at end: Temple, 4th May 1804.]

DEAR SIR,

I have no sort of connexion with the *Morning Post* at present, nor acquaintance with its late Editor (the present Editor of the *Courier*) to ask a favour of him with propriety; but if it will be of any use, I believe I could get the insertions into the *British Press* (a *Morning Paper*) through a friend.—

Yours truly
C. LAMB.

156. TO THOMAS POOLE

[Dated at end: Temple, 5th May 1804.]

DEAR SIR,

I can get the insertions into the *British Press* without any difficulty at all. I am only sorry that I have no interest in the *M. Post*, having so much greater circulation. If your friend chuses it, you will be so good as to return me the *Critique*, of which I forgot to take a copy, and I suppose on Monday or Tuesday it will be in. The sooner I have it, the better.

Yours &c.
C. LAMB.

I did formerly assist in the *Post*, but have no longer any engagement.—

[Stuart, having sold the *Morning Post*, was now developing the *Courier*.]

157. TO DOROTHY WORDSWORTH

[Dated at end: 2nd June 1804.]

DEAR MISS WORDSWORTH,

The task of letter-writing in my family falls to me; you are the organ of correspondence in yours, so I address you rather than your brother. We are all sensibly obliged to you for the little

scraps (Arthur's Bower and his brethren) which you sent up; the bookseller has got them and paid Mrs. Fenwick for them. So while some are authors for fame, some for money, you have commenced author for charity. The least we can do, is to see your commissions fulfilled; accordingly I have booked this 2^d June 1804 from the Waggon Inn in Cripplegate the watch and books which I got from your brother Richard, together with Purchas's Pilgrimage and Brown's Religio Medici which I desire your brother's acceptance of, with some *pens*, of which I observed no great frequency when I tarried at Grasmere. (I suppose you have got Coleridge's letter)—These things I have put up in a deal box directed to Mr. Wordsworth, Grasmere, near Ambleside, Kendal, by the Kendal waggon. At the same time I have sent off a parcel by C.'s desire to Mr. T. Hutchinson to the care of Mr. 'T. Monkhouse, or T. Markhouse' (for C.'s writing is not very plain) Penrith, by the Penrith waggon this day; which I beg you to apprise them of, lest my direction fail. In your box, you will find a little parcel for Mrs. Coleridge, which she wants as soon as possible; also for yourselves the Cotton, Magnesia, bark and Oil, which come to £2. 3. 4. thus.

| | sh. |
|----------------------------|------------|
| Thread and needles | 17 |
| Magnesia | 8 |
| bark | 9 . 8 |
| Oil | 8 . 8 |
| | <hr/> |
| | 2 . 3 . 4 |
| packing case | 2 6 |
| | <hr/> |
| | 2 . 5 . 10 |
| deduct a guinea I owe you, | |
| which C. was to pay, | 1 . 1 . — |
| but did not | |
| | <hr/> |
| leaves you indebted | 1 . 4 . 10 |

whereby you may see how punctual I am.

I conclude with our kindest remembrances to your brother and Mrs. W.

We hear, the young John is a Giant.

And should you see Charles Lloyd, pray *forget* to give my love to him.

Yours truly, Dr Miss W.

C. LAMB.

June 2, 1804.

I send you two little copies of verses by Mary L—b:—

DIALOGUE BETWEEN A MOTHER AND CHILD

Child 'O Lady, lay your costly robes aside,
(*Sings*) No longer may you glory in your pride.'

Mother. Wherefore to day art singing in mine ear
Sad songs were made so long ago, my dear?
This day I am to be a bride, you know.
Why sing sad songs were made so long ago?

Child. 'O Mother lay your costly robes aside,'
For you may never be another's bride :
That line I learnt not in the old sad song.

Mother. I pray thee, pretty one, now hold thy tongue;
Play with the bride maids, and be glad, my boy,
For thou shalt be a second father's joy.

Child. One father fondled me upon his knee:
One father is enough alone for me.

Suggested by a print of 2 females after Leo[nardo da] Vinci,
called Prudence & Beauty, which hangs up in our ro[om].

O! that you could see the print!!

The Lady Blanch, regardless of all her lovers' fears,
To the Urseline Convent hastens, and long the Abbess hears:
'O Blanch, my child, repent thee of the courtly life ye lead.'
Blanch looked on a rose-bud, and little seem'd to heed;
She looked on the rose-bud, she looked round, and thought
On all her heart had whisper'd, and all the Nun had taught.
'I am worshipped by lovers, and brightly shines my fame,
All Christendom resoundeth the noble Blanch's name;
Nor shall I quickly wither like the rose-bud from the tree,
My Queen-like graces shining when my beauty's gone from me.
But when the sculptur'd marble is raised o'er my head,
And the matchless Blanch lies lifeless among the noble dead,
This saintly Lady Abbess has made me justly fear,
It nothing will avail me that I were worshipt here.'

I wish they may please you: we in these parts are not a little proud of them.

C. L.

['The little scraps.' The late Professor Knight informed me that the scraps were not written but only copied by Miss Wordsworth. 'Arthur's Bower' ran thus:

Arthur's bower has broke his band,
He comes riding up the land,
The King of Scots with all his power
Cannot build up Arthur's bower.

'Your brother Richard.' Wordsworth's eldest brother.

'Purchas's Pilgrimage.' Samuel Purchas (1575?-1626) was the author of *Purchas His Pilgrimage*, 1613; *Purchas His Pilgrim*, 1619; and *Hakluytus Posthumus, or Purchas His Pilgrimes*, 1625. This last is Purchas's best work, and is probably that which Lamb sent to Grasmere.

Mary Lamb's two poems, her earliest that we know with the exception of *Helen*, were printed in the *Works*, 1818.]

158. MARY LAMB AND CHARLES LAMB TO SARAH STODDART

[No date: ? June 1804.]

MY DEAREST SARAH,

Your letter, which contained the news of Coleridge's arrival, was a most welcome one; for we had begun to entertain very unpleasant apprehensions for his safety; and your kind reception of the forlorn wanderer gave me the greatest pleasure, and I thank you for it in my own and my brother's name. I shall depend upon you for hearing of his welfare; for he does not write himself; but, as long as we know he is safe, and in such kind friends' hands, we do not mind. Your letters, my dear Sarah, are to me very, very precious ones. They are the kindest, best, most natural ones I ever received. The one containing the news of the arrival of Coleridge perhaps the best I ever saw; and your old friend Charles is of my opinion. We sent it off to Mrs. Coleridge and the Wordsworths—as well because we thought it our duty to give them the first notice we had of our dear friend's safety, as that we were proud of shewing our Sarah's pretty letter.

The letters we received a few days after from you and your brother were far less welcome ones. I rejoiced to hear your sister is well; but I grieved for the loss of the dear baby; and I am sorry to find your brother is not so successful as he at first expected to be; and yet I am almost tempted to wish his ill fortune may send

him over [to] us again. He has a friend, I understand, who is now at the head of the Admiralty; why may he not return, and make a fortune here?

I cannot condole with you very sincerely upon your little failure in the fortune-making way. If you regret it, so do I. But I hope to see you a comfortable English wife; and the forsaken, forgotten William, of English-partridge memory, I have still a hankering after. However, I thank you for your frank communication, and I beg you will continue it in future; and if I do not agree with a good grace to your having a Maltese husband, I will wish you happy, provided you make it a part of your marriage articles that your husband shall allow you to come over sea and make me one visit; else may neglect and overlookedness be your portion while you stay there.

I would condole with you when the misfortune has fallen your poor leg; but such is the blessed distance we are at from each other, that I hope, before you receive this, that you forgot it ever happened.

Our compliments [to] the high ton at the Maltese court. Your brother is so profuse of them to me, that being, as you know, so unused to them, they perplex me sadly; in future, I beg they may be discontinued. They always remind me of the free, and, I believe, very improper, letter I wrote to you while you were at the Isle of Wight. The more kindly you and your brother and sister took the impertinent advice contained in it, the more certain I feel that it was unnecessary, and therefore highly improper: Do not let your brother compliment me into the memory of it again.

My brother has had a letter from your Mother, which has distressed him sadly—about the postage of some letters being paid by my brother. Your silly brother, it seems, has informed your Mother (I did not think your brother could have been so silly) that Charles had grumbled at paying the said postage. The fact was, just at that time we were very poor, having lost the *Morning Post*, and we were beginning to practise a strict economy. My brother, who never makes up his mind whether he will be a Miser or a Spendthrift, is at all times a strange mixture of both: of this failing, the even economy of your correct brother's temper makes him an ill judge. The miserly part of Charles, at that

time smarting under his recent loss, then happened to reign triumphant; and he would not write, or let me write, so often as he wished, because the postage cost two and four pence. Then came two or three of your poor Mother's letters nearly together; and the two and four pences he wished, but grudged, to pay for his own, he was forced to pay for hers. In this dismal distress, he applied to Fenwick to get his friend Motley to send them free from Portsmouth. This Mr. Fenwick could have done for half a word's speaking; but this he did not do. Then Charles foolishly and unthinkingly complained to your brother in a half serious, half joking way; and your brother has wickedly, and with malice afore thought, told your Mother. O fye upon him! what will your Mother think of us?

I too feel my share of blame in this vexatious business; for I saw the unlucky paragraph in my brother's letter; and I had a kind of foreboding that it would come to your Mother's ears—although I had a higher opinion of your brother's good sense than I find he deserved. By entreaties and prayers, I might have prevailed on my brother to say nothing about it. But I make a point of conscience never to interfere or cross my brother in the humour he happens to be in. It always appears to me to be a vexatious kind of Tyranny, that women have no business to exercise over men, which, merely because *they having a better judgement*, they have the power to do. Let *men* alone, and at last we find they come round to the right way, which *we*, by a kind of intuition, perceive at once. But better, far better, that we should let them often do wrong, than that they should have the torment of a Monitor always at their elbows.

Charles is sadly fretted now, I know, at what to say to your Mother. I have made this long preamble about it to induce [you,] if possible, to reinstate us in your Mother's good graces. Say to her it was a jest misunderstood; tell her Charles Lamb is not the shabby fellow she and her son took him for; but that he is now and then a trifle whimsical or so. I do not ask your brother to do this, for I am offended with him for the mischief he has made.

I feel that I have too lightly passed over the interesting account you sent me of your late disappointment. It was not because I did not feel and compl[ete]ly enter into the affair with you.

1804 M. AND C. LAMB TO SARAH STODDART

You surprise and please me with the frank and generous way in which you deal with your Lovers, taking a refusal from their so prudential hearts with a better grace and more good humour than other women accept a suitor's service. Continue this open artless conduct, and I trust you will at last find some man who has sense enough to know you are well worth risking a peaceable life of poverty for. I shall yet live to see you a poor, but happy, English wife.

Remember me most affectionately to Coleridge; and I thank you again and again for all your kindness to him. To dear Mrs. Stoddart and your brother, I beg my best love; and to you all I wish health and happiness, and a *soon* return to Old England.

I have sent to Mr. Burrell's for your kind present; but unfortunately he is not in town. I am impatient to see my fine silk handkerchiefs; and I thank you for them, not as a present, for I do not love presents, but as a [*word illegible*] remembrance of your old friend. Farewell.

I am, my best Sarah,

Your most affectionate friend,

MARY LAMB.

Good wishes, and all proper remembrances, from old nurse, Mrs. Jeffries, Mrs. Reynolds, Mrs. Rickman, &c. &c. &c.

Long live Queen Hoop-oo-oo-oo, and all the old merry phantoms!

[*Charles Lamb begins here*]

MY DEAR MISS STODDART,

Mary has written so fully to you, that I have nothing to add but that, in all the kindness she has exprest, and loving desire to see you again, I bear my full part. You will, perhaps, like to tear this half from the sheet, and give your brother only his strict due, the remainder. So I will just repay your late kind letter with this short postscript to hers. Come over here, and let us all be merry again.

C. LAMB.

[Coleridge reached Valetta on 18th May 1804; but no opportunity to send letters home occurred until 5th June. Miss Stoddart seems to have given up all her lovers at home in the hope of finding one in Malta.]

'The blessed distance.' Here Mary Lamb throws out an idea afterwards developed by her brother in the *Elia* essay on 'Distant Correspondents.'

Lamb's letter to Stoddart containing the complaint as to postage no longer exists. Mrs. Stoddart, Sarah's mother, had remained in England, at Salisbury.

Of Mr. Burrel I know nothing: he was probably an agent; nor can I explain Queen Hoop-oop-oo.]

159. CHARLES LAMB TO ROBERT LLOYD

September 13, 1804.

DEAR ROBERT,

I was startled in a very pleasant manner by the contents of your letter. It was like your good self to take so handsome an opportunity of renewing an old friendship. I thank you kindly for your offers to bring me acquainted with Mrs. Ll. I cannot come now, but assuredly I will some time or other, to see how this new relation sits upon you. I am naturally shy of new faces; but the Lady who has chosen my old friend Robert cannot have a repelling one. Assure her of my sincere congratulations and friendly feelings. Mary joins in both with me, and considers herself as only left out of your kind invitation by some LAPSUS STYLI. We have already had all the holydays we can have this year. We have been spending our usual summer month at Richmond, from which place we traced the banks of the old Thames for ten and twenty miles, in daily walks or rides, and found beauties which may compare with Ulswater and Windermere. We visited Windsor, Hampton, etc. etc.—but this is a deviation from the subject with which I began my letter.

Some day I certainly shall come and see you in your new light; no longer the restless (but good) [? single] Robert; but now the staid, sober (and not less good) married Robert. And how does Plumstead, the impetuous, take your getting the start of him? When will he subside into matrimony? Priscilla has taken a long time indeed to think about it. I will suppose that her first choice is now her final; though you do not expressly say that she is to be a Wordsworth. I wish her, and dare promise her, all happiness.

All these new nuptials do not make me unquiet in the perpetual

prospect of celibacy. There is a quiet dignity in old bachelorhood, a leisure from cares, noise, etc., an enthronisation upon the armed-chair of a man's feeling that he may sit, walk, read, unmolested, to none accountable—but hush! or I shall be torn in pieces like a churlish Orpheus by young married women and bridemaids of Birmingham. The close is this, to every man that way of life, which in his election is best. Be as happy in yours as I am determined to be in mine, and we shall strive lovingly who shall sing best the praises of matrimony, and the praises of singleness.

Adieu, my old friend in a new character, and believe me that no 'wounds' have pierced our friendship; only a long want of seeing each other has disfurnished us of topics on which to talk. Is not your new fortunes a topic which may hold us for some months (the honey months at least)?

C. LAMB.

160. *Joint letter*: CHARLES LAMB TO WILLIAM WORDSWORTH, MARY LAMB TO DOROTHY WORDSWORTH, AND MARY LAMB TO MRS. COLERIDGE

[P.M. 13th October 1804.]

(Turn over leaf for more letters.)

DEAR WORDSWORTH,

I have not forgot your commissions. But the truth is, and why should I not confess it? I am not plethorically abounding in Cash at this present. Merit, God knows, is very little rewarded; but it does not become me to speak of myself. My motto is 'Contented with little, yet wishing for more.' Now the books you wish for would require some pounds, which I am sorry to say I have not by me: so I will say at once, if you will give me a draft upon your town-banker for any sum you propose to lay out, I will dispose of [it] to the very best of my skill in choice old books, such as my own soul loveth. In fact, I have been waiting for the liquidation of a debt to enable myself to set about your commission handsomely, for it is a scurvy thing to cry Give me the money first, and I am the first of the family of the Lambs that have done it for many centuries: but the debt remains

as it was, and my old friend that I accommodated has generously forgot it!

The books which you want I calculate at about £8.

Ben Jonson is a Guinea Book. Beaumont & Fletcher in folio, the right folio, not now to be met with; the octavos are about £3. As to any other old dramatists, I do not know where to find them except what are in Dodsley's old plays, which are about £3 also: Massinger I never saw but at one shop, but it is now gone, but one of the editions of Dodsley contains about a fourth (the best) of his plays. Congreve and the rest of King Charles's moralists are cheap and accessible. The works on Ireland I will enquire after, but I fear, Spenser's is not to be had apart from his poems; I never saw it. But you may depend upon my sparing no pains to furnish you as complete a library of old Poets & Dramatists as will be prudent to buy; for I suppose you do not include the £20 edition of Hamlet, single play, which Kemble has. Marlow's plays and poems are totally vanished; only one edition of Dodsley retains one, and the other two, of his plays: but John Ford is the man after Shakespear. Let me know your will and pleasure soon: for I have observed, next to the pleasure of buying a bargain for one's self is the pleasure of persuading a friend to buy it. It tickles one with the image of an imprudency without the penalty usually annex'd.

C. LAMB.

[*Mary Lamb to Dorothy Wordsworth*]

[P.M. 13th October 1804.]

MY DEAR MISS WORDSWORTH,

I writ a letter immediately upon the receipt of yours, to thank you for sending me the welcome tidings of your little niece's birth, and Mrs. Wordsworth's safety, & waited till I could get a frank to send it in. Not being able to procure one, I will defer my thanks no longer for fear Mrs. Wordsworth should add another little baby to your family, before my congratulations on the birth of the little Dorothy arrive.

I hope Mrs. Wordsworth, & the pretty baby, & the young philosopher, are well: they are three strangers to me whom I have a longing desire to be acquainted with.

My brother desires me not to send such a long gossiping letter as that I had intended for you, because he wishes to fill a large

share of the paper with his acknowledgments to Mr. Wordsworth for his letters, which he considers as a very uncommon favor, your brother seldom writing letters. I must beg my brother will tell Mr. Wordsworth how very proud he has made me also by praising my poor verses. Will you be so kind as to forward the opposite page to Mrs. Coleridge. This sheet of paper is quite a partnership affair. When the parliament meets you shall have a letter for your sole use.

My brother and I have been this summer to Richmond; we had a lodging there for a month, we passed the whole time there in wandering about, & comparing the views from the banks of the Thames with your mountain scenery, & tried, & wished, to persuade ourselves that it was almost as beautiful. Charles was quite a Mr. Clarkson in his admiration and his frequent exclamations, for though we had often been at Richmond for a few hours we had no idea it was so beautiful a place as we found it on a month's intimate acquaintance.

We rejoice to hear of the good fortune of your brave sailor-brother, I should have liked to have been with you when the news first arrived.

Your very friendly invitations have made us long to be with you, and we promise ourselves to spend the first money my brother earns by writing certain books (Charles often plans but never begins) in a journey to Grasmere.

When your eyes (which I am sorry to find continue unwell) will permit you to make use of your pen again I shall be very happy to see a letter in your own hand writing.

I beg to be affectionately remembered to your brother & sister
& remain ever your affectionate friend

M. LAMB.

Compliments to old Molly.

[*Mary Lamb to Mrs. S. T. Coleridge*]

[P.M. 13th October 1804.]

MY DEAR MRS. COLERIDGE,

I have had a letter written ready to send to you, which I kept, hoping to get a frank, and now I find I must write one entirely anew, for that consisted of matter not now in season, such as condolence on the illness of your children, who I hope are now

quite well, & comfortings on your uncertainty of the safety of Coleridge, with wise reasons for the delay of the letters from Malta, which must now be changed for pleasant congratulations. Coleridge has not written to us, but we have had two letters from the Stoddarts since the one I sent to you, containing good accounts of him, but as I find you have had letters from himself I need not tell you the particulars.

My brother sent your letters to Mr. Motley according to Coleridge's direction, & I have no doubt but he forwarded them.

One thing only in my poor letter the time makes no alteration in, which is that I have half a bed ready for you, & I shall rejoice with exceeding great joy to have you with me. Pray do not change your mind for I shall be sadly disappointed if you do. Will Hartley be with you? I hope he will, for you say he goes with you to Liverpool, and I conclude you come from thence to London.

I have seen your brother lately, and I find he entertains good hopes from Mr. Salte, and his present employment I hear is likely to continue a considerable time longer, so that I hope you may consider him as good as provided for. He seems very steady, and is very well spoken of at his office.

I have lately been often talking of you with Mrs. Hazlitt. William Hazlitt is painting my brother's picture, which has brought us acquainted with the whole family. I like William Hazlitt and his sister very much indeed, & I think Mrs. Hazlitt a pretty good-humoured woman. She has a nice little girl of the Pypos kind, who is so fond of my brother that she stops strangers in the street to tell them when *Mr. Lamb is coming to see her*.

I hope Mr. Southey and your sister and the little Edith are well. I beg my love to them.

God bless you, and your three little darlings, & their wandering father, who I hope will soon return to you in high health & spirits.

I remain ever your affectionate friend

MARY LAMB.

Compliments to Mr. Jackson and darling friend. I hope they are well.

[*Charles Lamb adds :*]

C. Lamb particularly desires to be remembered to Southey and all the Southseys, as well as to Mrs. C., and her little Cole-

ridges. Mrs. C.'s letters have all been sent as Coleridge left word, to Motley's, Portsmouth.

[The Ben Jonson in Lamb's own library was the 1692 folio; his Beaumont and Fletcher, which may be seen at the British Museum, was the folio of 1647 or 1679.

Spenser's prose work, *View of the Present State of Ireland*, is that referred to. 'John Ford.' Lamb says in the *Dramatic Specimens*, 1808, 'Ford was of the first order of poets.'

Dorothy Wordsworth (afterwards the wife of Edward Quillinan) was born 16th August 1804.

'Your brave sailor-brother.' John Wordsworth.

Mrs. Coleridge now had three children—Hartley, Derwent, and Sara. We do not know whether or no she stayed with the Lambs, as suggested. Her brother was George Fricker.

Mrs. Anderson discovered that there was a Wm. Salte, wholesale linen-draper, at 20 Poultry in the 1799 and 1808 directories.

William Hazlitt's sister was Peggy Hazlitt. His sister-in-law, Mrs. Hazlitt, was the wife of John Hazlitt, the miniature painter. Some of Peggy's paintings and a portrait of her are in the Maidstone Museum.

Hazlitt's portrait of Lamb was the one in the dress of a Venetian senator, which now hangs in the National Portrait Gallery. Another version of it, with Lamb holding *Rosamund Gray* in his hand, exists.]

161. CHARLES LAMB TO ROBERT SOUTHEY

7 Nov., 1804.

DEAR SOUTHEY,

You were the last person from whom we heard of Dyer, and if you know where to forward the news I now send to him, I shall be obliged to you to lose no time. D.'s sister-in-law, who lives in St. Dunstan's Court, wrote to him about three weeks ago, to the Hope Inn, Cambridge, to inform him that Squire Houlbert, or some such name, of Denmark Hill, has died, and left her husband a thousand pounds, and two or three hundred to Dyer. Her letter got no answer, and she does not know where to direct to him; so she came to me, who am equally in the dark. Her story is, that Dyer's immediately coming to town now, and signing some papers, will save him a considerable sum of money—how, I don't understand; but it is very right he should hear of this. She has left me barely time for the post; so I conclude with all Love, &c., to all at Keswick.

Dyer's brother, who by his wife's account, has got 1000*l.* left him, is father of the little dirty girl, Dyer's niece and factotum.

In haste,

Yours truly,

C. LAMB.

If you send George this, cut off the last paragraph.

D.'s laundress had a letter a few days since; but George never dates.

[Mrs. Anderson's note: 'Richard Holburt Esq.'s will was proved 10th October 1804: £1,000 3 per cent stock to John Dyer, lighter man, Fleet Street, £250 to G. D., both paid before the dividend day occurring next after his decease.']

162. TO WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

[P.M. 18th February 1805.]

MY DEAR WORDSWORTH,

The subject of your letter has never been out of our thoughts since the day we first heard of it, and many have been our impulses towards you, to write to you, or to write to enquire about you; but it never seemed the time. We felt all your situation, and how much you would want Coleridge at such a time, and we wanted somehow to make up to you his absence, for we loved and honoured your Brother, and his death always occurs to my mind with something like a feeling of reproach, as if we ought to have been nearer acquainted, and as if there had been some incivility shown him by us, or something short of that respect which we now feel: but this is always a feeling when people die, and I should not foolishly offer a piece of refinement, instead of sympathy, if I knew any other way of making you feel how little like indifferent his loss has been to us. I have been for some time wretchedly ill and low, and your letter this morning has affected me so with a pain in my inside and a confusion, that I hardly know what to write or how. I have this morning seen Stewart, the 2^d mate, who was saved: but he can give me no satisfactory account, having been in quite another part of the ship when your brother went down. But I shall see Gilpin tomorrow, and will communicate your thanks, and learn

from him all I can. All accounts agree that just before the vessel going down, your brother seemed like one overwhelmed with the situation, and careless of his own safety. Perhaps he might have saved himself; but a Captain who in such circumstances does all he can for his ship and nothing for himself, is the noblest idea. I can hardly express myself, I am so really ill. But the universal sentiment is, that your brother did all that duty required: and if he had been more alive to the feelings of those distant ones whom he loved, he would have been at that time a less admirable object; less to be exulted in by them: for his character is high with all that I have heard speak of him, and no reproach can fix upon him. Tomorrow I shall see Gilpin, I hope, if I can get at him, for there is expected a complete investigation of the causes of the loss of the ship, at the East India House, and all the Officers are to attend: but I could not put off writing to you a moment. It is most likely I shall have something to add tomorrow, in a second letter. If I do not write, you may suppose I have not seen G. but you shall hear from me in a day or two. We have done nothing but think of you, particularly of Dorothy. Mary is crying by me while I with difficulty write this: but as long as we remember any thing, we shall remember your Brother's noble person, and his sensible manly modest voice, and how safe and comfortable we all were together in our apartment, where I am now writing. When he returned, having been one of the triumphant China fleet, we thought of his pleasant exultation (which he exprest here one night) in the wish that he might meet a Frenchman in the seas; and it seem'd to be accomplished, all to his heart's desire. I will conclude from utter inability to write any more, for I am seriously unwell: and because I mean to gather something like intelligence to send to you tomorrow: for as yet, I have but heard second hand, and seen one narrative, which is but a transcript of what was common to all the Papers. God bless you all, and reckon upon us as entering into all your griefs.

[This is the first of a series of letters bearing upon the loss of the East India-man *Earl of Abergavenny*, which was wrecked off Portland Bill on 5th February 1805, 200 persons and the captain, John Wordsworth, being lost. The character of Wordsworth's *Happy Warrior* (1806) is said to have been largely drawn from his brother John, to whose memory he also wrote *Elegiac Verses* in 1805. His age was only thirty-three.]

163. TO WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

[P.M. 19th February 1805.]

MY DEAR WORDSWORTH,

I yesterday wrote you a very unsatisfactory letter. To day I have not much to add, but it may be some satisfaction to you that I have seen Gilpin, and thanked him in all your names for the assistance he tried to give: and that he has assured me that your Brother did try to save himself, and was doing so when Gilpin called to him, but he was then struggling with the waves and almost dead. G. heard him give orders a very little before the vessel went down, with all possible calmness, and it does not at all appear that your Brother in any absence of mind neglected his own safety. But in such circumstances the memory of those who escaped cannot be supposed to be very accurate; and there appears to be about the Persons that I have seen a good deal of reservedness and unwillingness to enter into detail, which is natural, they being Officers of the Ship, and liable to be examined at home about its loss. The examination is expected to day or to-morrow, and if any thing should come out, that can interest you, I shall take an early opportunity of sending it to you.

Mary wrote some few days since to Miss Stoddart, containing an account of your Brother's death, which most likely Coleridge will have heard, before the letter comes: we both wish it may hasten him back. We do not know any thing of him, whether he is settled in any post (as there was some talk) or not. We had another sad account to send him, of the death of his school-fellow Allen; tho' this, I am sure, will much less affect him. I don't know whether you knew Allen; he died lately very suddenly in an apoplexy. When you do and can write, particularly inform us of the healths of you all. God bless you all. Mary will write to Dorothy as soon as she thinks she will be able to bear it. It has been a sad tidings to us, and has affected us more than we could have believed. I think it has contributed to make me worse, who have been very unwell, and have got leave for some few days to stay at home: but I am ashamed to speak of myself, only in excuse for the unfeeling sort of huddle which I now send. I could not delay it, having seen Gilpin, and I thought his assurance might be some little ease to you.

We will talk about the Books, when you can better bear it. I have bought none yet. But do not spare me any office you can put me on, now or when you are at leisure for such things. Adopt me as one of your family in this affliction; and use me without ceremony as such.

Mary's kindest Love to all.

C. L.

Tuesday [19th February].

[Coleridge a little later accepted the post of private secretary to the Governor of Malta, Vice-Admiral Sir Alexander John Ball. Allen was Bob Allen, whom we have already met.]

164. TO THOMAS MANNING

16 Mitre-court Buildings,

Saturday, 24th [i.e. 23rd] Feb., 1805.

DEAR MANNING,

We have executed your commissions. There was nothing for you at the White Horse. I have been very unwell since I saw you. A sad depression of spirits, a most unaccountable nervousness; from which I have been partially relieved by an odd accident. You knew Dick Hopkins, the swearing scullion of Caius? This fellow, by industry and agility, has thrust himself into the important situations (no sinecures, believe me) of cook to Trinity Hall and Caius College: and the generous creature has contrived with the greatest delicacy imaginable, to send me a present of Cambridge brawn. What makes it the more extraordinary is, that the man never saw me in his life that I know of. I suppose he has *heard* of me. I did not immediately recognise the donor; but one of Richard's cards, which had accidentally fallen into the straw, detected him in a moment. Dick, you know, was always remarkable for flourishing. His card imports, that 'orders (to wit, for brawn), from any part of England, Scotland, or Ireland will be duly executed,' &c. At first, I thought of declining the present; but Richard knew my blind side when he pitched upon brawn. 'Tis of all my hobbies the supreme in the eating way. He might have sent sops from the pan, skimmings, crumplets, chips, hog's lard, the tender brown judiciously scalped from a fillet of veal (dexterously replaced by a salamander),

the tops of asparagus, fugitive livers, run-away gizzards of fowls, the eyes of martyred pigs, tender effusions of laxative woodcocks, the red spawn of lobsters, leverets' ears, and such pretty filchings common to cooks; but these had been ordinary presents, the everyday courtesies of dishwashers to their sweethearts. Brawn was a noble thought. It is not every common gullet-fancier that can properly esteem it. It is like a picture of one of the choice old Italian masters. Its gusto is of that hidden sort. As Wordsworth sings of a modest poet,—‘you must love him, ere to you he will seem worthy of your love;’ so brawn, you must taste it, ere to you it will seem to have any taste at all. But ’tis nuts to the adept: those that will send out their tongues and feelers to find it out. It will be wooed, and not unsought be won. Now, ham-essence, lobsters, turtle, such popular minions, absolutely *court you*, lay themselves out to strike you at first smack, like one of David’s pictures (they call him *Darveed*), compared with the plain russet-coated wealth of a Titian or a Correggio, as I illustrated above. Such are the obvious glaring heathen virtues of a corporation dinner, compared with the reserved collegiate worth of brawn. Do me the favour to leave off the business which you may be at present upon, and go immediately to the kitchens of Trinity and Caius, and make my most respectful compliments to Mr. Richard Hopkins, and assure him that his brawn is most excellent; and that I am moreover obliged to him for his innuendo about salt water and bran, which I shall not fail to improve. I leave it to you whether you shall choose to pay him the civility of asking him to dinner while you stay in Cambridge, or in whatever other way you may best like to show your gratitude to *my friend*. Richard Hopkins, considered in many points of view, is a very extraordinary character. Adieu: I hope to see you to supper in London soon, where we will taste Richard’s brawn, and drink his health in a cheerful but moderate cup. We have not many such men in any rank of life as Mr. R. Hopkins. Crisp the barber, of St. Mary’s, was just such another. I wonder *he* never sent me any little token, some chesnuts, or a puff, or two pound of hair just to remember him by; gifts are like nails. Præsens ut absens, that is, your *Present* makes amends for your absence.

Yours,

C. LAMB.

[This letter is, I take it, a joke: that is to say, the brawn was sent to Lamb by Manning, who seems to have returned to Cambridge for a while, and Lamb affects to believe that Hopkins, from whom it was bought, was the giver. I think this view is supported by the reference to Mr. Crisp, at the end, Mr. Crisp being Manning's late landlord.

The following advertisement occurs in the *Cambridge Chronicle* for 8th February 1806. It was sent me by Dr. Wherry of Cambridge:

CAMBRIDGE BRAWN

R. HOPKINS, Cook of Trinity Hall and Caius College, begs leave to inform the Nobility, Gentry, &c. that he has now ready for sale, BRAWN, BRAWN HEADS & CHEEKS.

All orders will be thankfully received, and forwarded to any part of the kingdom.

Lamb stayed at 3 St. Mary's Passage, now rebuilt and occupied by Messrs. Leach & Son (1934).

The letter contains Lamb's second expression of epicurean rapture: the first in praise of pig.

'As Wordsworth sings.' In the *Poet's Epitaph*:

He is retired as noontide dew,
Or fountain in a noon-day grove;
And you must love him, ere to you
He will seem worthy of your love.

'Præsens ut absens.' Lamb enlarged upon the topic of gifts and giving many years later, in the Popular Fallacy, 'That we must not look a Gift Horse in the Mouth,' 1826, and in his 'Thoughts on Presents of Game,' 1833.]

165. TO WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

[P.M. 5th March 1805.]

MY DEAR WORDSWORTH,

If Gilpin's statement has afforded you any satisfaction, I can assure you that he was most explicit in giving it, and even seemed anxious (interrupting me) to do away any misconception. His statement is not contradicted by the last and fullest of the two Narratives which have been published (the former being a mere transcript of the newspapers), which I would send you if I did not suppose that you would receive more pain from the unfeeling canting way in which it is drawn up, than satisfaction from its contents; and what relates to your brother in particular is very

short. It states that your brother was seen talking to the First Mate but a few minutes before the ship sank, with apparent cheerfulness, and it contradicts the newspaper account about his depression of spirits procrastinating his taking leave of the Court of Directors; which the drawer up of the Narrative (a man high in the India House) is likely to be well informed of. It confirms Gilpin's account of his seeing your brother striving to save himself, and adds that 'Webber, a Joiner, was near the Captain, who was standing on the hencoop when the ship went down, whom he saw washed off by a sea, which also carried him (Webber) overboard;'—this is all which concerns your brother personally. But I will just transcribe from it, a Copy of Gilpin's account delivered in to the Court of Directors:—

Memorandum respecting the Loss of the E. of A.

At 10 A.M. being about 10 leagues to the westward of Portland, the Commadore made the signal to bear up—did so accordingly; at this time having maintop gallant mast struck, fore and mizen d^o. on deck, and the jib boom in the wind about W.S.W. At 3 P.M. got on board a Pilot, being about 2 leagues to the westward of Portland; ranged and bitted both cables at about $\frac{1}{2}$ past 3, called all hands and got out the jib boom at about 4. While crossing the east End of the Shambles, the wind suddenly died away, and a strong tide setting the ship to the westward, drifted her into the breakers, and a sea striking her on the larboard quarter, brought her to, with her head to the northward, when she instantly struck, it being about 5 P.M. Let out all the reefs, and hoisted the topsails up, in hopes to shoot the ship across the Shambles. About this time the wind shifted to the N.W. The surf driving us off, and the tide setting us on alternately, sometimes having $4\frac{1}{2}$ at others 9 fathoms, sand of the sea about 8 feet; continued in this situation till about $\frac{1}{2}$ past 7, when she got off. During the time she was on the Shambles, had from 3 to 4 feet water; kept the water at this height about 15 minutes, during the whole time the pumps constantly going. Finding she gained on us, it was determined to run her on the nearest shore. About 8 the wind shifted to the eastward: the leak continuing to gain upon the pumps, having 10 or 11 feet water, found it expedient to bale at the forecuttles and hatchway. The ship would not bear up—kept the helm hard a starboard, she being water-logg'd: but still had a hope she could be kept up till we got her on Weymouth Sands. Cut the lashings of the boats—could not get the Long Boat out, without laying the main-top-sail aback, by which our progress would have been so delayed, that no hope would have been left us of running her aground, and there being several sloops in sight, one having sent a small skiff on board, took away 2 Ladies and 3 other passengers, and put them on board the sloop, at the same time promising to return and take away a hundred or more of the people: she finding much difficulty in getting back to the sloop, did not return. About this time the Third Mate and Purser

were sent in the cutter to get assistance from the other ships. Continued pumping and baling till 11 P.M. when she sunk. Last cast of the lead 11 fathoms; having fired guns from the time she struck till she went down, about 2 A.M. boats came and took the people from the wreck about 70 in number. The troops, in particular the Dragoons, pumped very well.

(Signed) THO^s. GILPIN.

And now, my dear W.—I must apologize for having named my health. But indeed it was because, what with the ill news, your letter coming upon me in a most wretched state of ill spirits, I was scarce able to give it an answer, and I felt what it required. But we will say no more about it. I am getting better. And when I have persisted time enough in a course of regular living I shall be well. But I am now well enough; and have got to business afresh. Mary thanks you for your invitation. I have wished myself with you daily since the news. I have wished that I were Coleridge, to give you any consolation. You have not mourned without one to have a feeling of it. And we have not undervalued the intimation of your friendship. We shall one day prove it by intruding on your privacy, when these griefs shall be a little calmed. This year, I am afraid, it is impossible: but I shall store it up as among the good things to come, which keep us up when life and spirits are sinking.

If you have not seen, or wish to see, the wretched narrative I have mentioned, I will send it. But there is nothing more in it affecting you. I have hesitated to send it, because it is unfeelingly done, and in the hope of sending you something from some of the actual spectators; but I have been disappointed, and can add nothing yet. Whatever I pick up, I will store for you. It is perfectly understood at the E. I. House, that no blame whatever belongs to the Capt^a. or Officers.

I can add no more but Mary's warmest Love to all. When you can write without trouble, do it, for you are among the very chief of our interests.

C. LAMB.

4 March.

166. TO WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

[Dated at end: *21st March 1805.*]

DEAR WORDSWORTH,

Upon the receipt of your last letter before that which I have just received, I wrote myself to Gilpin putting your questions to him; but have yet had no answer. I at the same time got a person in the India House to write a much fuller enquiry to a relative of his who was saved, one Yates a midshipman. Both these officers (and indeed pretty nearly all that are left) have got appointed to other ships and have joined them. Gilpin is in the Comet, India-man, now lying at Gravesend. Neither Yates nor Gilpin have yet answered, but I am in daily expectation. I have sent your letter of this morning also to Gilpin. The waiting for these answers has been my reason for not writing you. I have made very particular enquiries about Webber, but in vain. He was a common seaman (not the ship's carpenter) and no traces of him are at the I. House: it is most probable that he has entered in some Privateer, as most of the crew have done. I will keep the £1 note till you find out something I can do with it. I now write idly, having nothing to send: but I cannot bear that you should think I have quite neglected your commission. My letter to G. was such as I thought he could not but answer: but he may be busy. The letter to Yates I hope I can promise will be answered. One thing, namely why the other ships sent no assistance, I have learn'd from a person on board one of them: the firing was never once heard, owing to the very stormy night, and no tidings came to them till next morning. The sea was quite high enough to have thrown out the most expert swimmer, and might not your brother have received some blow in the shock, which disabled him? We are glad to hear poor Dorothy is a little better. None of you are able to bear such a stroke. To people oppressed with feeling, the loss of a good-humoured happy man that has been friendly with them, if he were no brother, is bad enough. But you must cultivate his spirits, as a legacy: and believe that such as he cannot be lost. He was a chearful soul! God bless you. Mary's love always.

C. LAMB.

21st March, 1805.

167. TO WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

[P.M. 5th April 1805.]

DEAR WORDSWORTH,

I have this moment received this letter from Gilpin in reply to 3 or 4 short questions I put to him in my letter before yours for him came. He does not notice having rec^d yours, which I sent immediately. Perhaps he has already answered it to you. You see that his hand is sprain'd, and your questions being more in number, may delay his answer to you. My first question was, when it was he called to your brother: the rest you will understand from the answers. I was beginning to have hard thoughts of G. from his delay, but now I am confirm'd in my first opinion that he is a rare good-hearted fellow. How is Dorothy? and all of you?

Yours sincerely

C. LAMB.

4th question was, was Capt. W. standing near the shrouds or any place of safety at the moment of sinking?

Comet,

Northfleet, March 31st, 1805.

SIR,

I did not receive yours of 16th inst^t till this day, or sh^d have answered it sooner. To your first Question, I answer after the Ship had sunk. To your second, my answer is, I was in the Starboard Mizzen Rigging—I thought I see the Captⁿ hanging by a Rope that was fast to the Mizzen Mast. I came down and haild him as loud as I could, he was about 10 feet distant from me. I threw a rope which fell close to him, he seem'd quite Motionless and insensible (it was excessive cold), and was soon after sweep'd away, and I see him no more. It was near about five minutes after the Ship went down. With respect to the Captⁿ and Webber being on the same Hencoop, I can give no answer, all I can say, I did not see them. Your fourth Question, I cannot answer, as I did not see Capt. Wordsworth at the moment the Ship was going down, tho I was then on the Poop less than one minute before I see the Captⁿ there. The Statement in the printed Pamphlet is by no means correct. I have sprained my Wrist, most violently, and am now in great pain, which will, I hope, be an apology for the shortness of this Letter.

believe me truly yours *

THOS. GILPIN.

This Letter has been detained till April 5th.

* This is merely a kind way of expressing himself, for I have

no acquaintance with him, nor ever saw him but that once I got introduced to him.

I think I did not mention in my last, that I sent yours to T. Evans, Richmond. I hope you have got an answer.

[In a letter from Dorothy Wordsworth to Mrs. Clarkson, dated 19th April 1805, we read: 'I have great pleasure in thinking that you may see Miss Lamb; do not miss it, if you can possibly go without injury to yourself—they are the best good creatures—blessings be with them! they have sympathised in our sorrow as tenderly as if they had grown up in the same [? town] with us and known our beloved John from his childhood. Charles has written to us the most consolatory letters, the result of diligent and painful inquiry of the survivors of the wreck,—for this we must love him as long as we have breath. I think of him and his sister every day of my life, and many times in the day with thankfulness and blessings. Talk to dear Miss Lamb about coming into this country and let us hear what she says of it. I cannot express how much we all wish to see her and her brother while we are at Grasmere. We look forward to Coleridge's return with fear and painful hope—but indeed I dare not look to it—I think as little as I can of him.']

168. MARY LAMB TO DOROTHY WORDSWORTH

[P.M. 7th May 1805.]

MY DEAR MISS WORDSWORTH,

I thank you, my kind friend, for your most comfortable letter. Till I saw your own handwriting, I could not persuade myself that I should do well to write to you, though I have often attempted it, but I always left off dissatisfied with what I had written, and feeling that I was doing an improper thing to intrude upon your sorrow. I wished to tell you, that you would one day feel the kind of peaceful state of mind, and sweet memory of the dead which you so happily describe as now almost begun, but I felt that it was improper, and most grating to the feelings of the afflicted, to say to them that the memory of their affliction would in time become a constant part not only of their 'dream, but of their most wakeful sense of happiness.' That you would see every object with, and through your lost brother, and that that would at last become a real and everlasting source of comfort to you, I felt, and well knew from my own experience in sorrow, but till you yourself began to feel this I did not dare tell you so,

but I send you some poor lines which I wrote under this conviction of mind, and before I heard Coleridge was returning home. I will transcribe them now before I finish my letter, lest a false shame prevent me then, for I know they are much worse than they ought to be, written as they were with strong feeling and on such a subject. Every line seems to me to be borrowed, but I had no better way of expressing my thoughts, and I never have the power of altering or amending anything I have once laid aside with dissatisfaction.

Why is he wandering on the sea?
Coleridge should now with Wordsworth be.
By slow degrees he'd steal away
Their woe, and gently bring a ray
(So happily he'd time relief)
Of comfort from their very grief.
He'd tell them that their brother dead
When years have passed o'er their head,
Will be remember'd with such holy,
True, and perfect melancholy
That ever this lost brother John
Will be their heart's companion.
His voice they'll always hear, his face they'll always see,
There's nought in life so sweet as such a memory.

Mr. and Mrs. Clarkson came to see us last week, I find it was at your request they sought us out; you cannot think how glad we were to see them, so little as we have ever seen of them, yet they seem to us like very old friends. Poor Mrs. Clarkson looks very ill indeed, she walked near a mile, and came up our high stairs, which fatigued her very much, but when she had sat a while her own natural countenance with which she cheered us in your little cottage seemed to return to her, and then I began to have hopes she would get the better of her complaint. Charles does not think she is so much altered as I do. I wish he may be the better judge. We talked of nothing but you. She means to try to get leave of Dr. Beddoes to come and see you—her heart is with you, and I do not think it would hurt her so much to come to you, as it would distress you to see her so ill.

She read me a part of your letter wherein you so kindly express your wishes that we would come and see you this summer. I wish we could, for I am sure it would be a blessed thing for you and for

us to be a few weeks together—I fear it must not be. Mrs. Clarkson is to be in town again in a fortnight and then they have promised we shall see more of them.

I am very sorry for the poor little Dorothy's illness—I hope soon to hear she is perfectly recovered. Remember me with affection to your brother, and your good sister. What a providence it is that your brother and you have this kind friend, and these dear little ones—I rejoice with her and with you that your brother is employed upon his poem again.

Pray remember us to Old Molly. Mrs. Clarkson says her house is a pattern of neatness to all her neighbours—such good ways she learnt of 'Mistress.' How well I remember the shining ornaments of her kitchen, and her old friendly face, not [the] least ornamental part of it.

Excuse the haste I write in. I am unexpectedly to go out to dinner, else I think I have much more to say, but I will not put it off till next post, because you so kindly say I must not write if I feel unwilling—you do not know what very great joy I have in being again writing to you. Thank you for sending the letter of Mr. Evans, it was a very kind one. Have you received one from a Cornet Burgoine? My brother wrote to him and desires he would direct his answer to your brother.

God bless you and yours my dear friend.

I am yours affectionately

M. LAMB.

[Dr. Beddoes, who was attending Mrs. Clarkson, would be, I suppose, Thomas Beddoes of Clifton (1760–1808), the father of Thomas Lovell Beddoes and a friend of Coleridge and Southey.]

169. CHARLES LAMB TO DOROTHY WORDSWORTH

[*Slightly torn. The conjectures in square brackets are Talfourd's.*]

Friday, 14th June, 1805.

MY DEAR MISS WORDSWORTH,

Your long kind letter has not been thrown away (for it has given me great pleasure to find you are all resuming your old occupa-

tions, and are better) but poor Mary to whom it is address cannot yet relish it. She has been attacked by one of her severe illnesses, and is at present *from home*. Last Monday week was the day she left me; and I hope I may calculate upon having her again in a month, or little more. I am rather afraid late hours have in this case contributed to her indisposition. But when she begins to discover symptoms of approaching illness, it is not easy to say what is best to do. Being by ourselves is bad, and going out is bad. I get so irritable and wretched with fear, that I constantly hasten on the disorder. You cannot conceive the misery of such a foresight. I am sure that for the week before she left me, I was little better than light-headed. I now am calm, but sadly taken down, and flat. I have every reason to suppose that this illness, like all her former ones, will be but temporary; but I cannot always feel so. Meantime she is dead to me, and I miss a prop. All my strength is gone, and I am like a [fool, her]eft of her co-operation. I dare not think, lest I [should think] wrong; so used am I to look up to her [in the least] and the biggest perplexity. To say *all that* [I know of her] would be more than I think any body could [believe or even under]stand; and when I hope to have her well [again with me] it would be sinning against her feelings to go about to praise her; for I can conceal nothing that I do from her. She is older, and wiser, and better, than me, and all my wretched imperfections I cover to myself by resolutely thinking on her goodness. She would share life and death, heaven and hell, with me. She lives but for me. And I know I have been wasting and teasing her life for five years past incessantly with my cursed drinking and ways of going on. But even in this up-braiding of myself I am offending against her, for I know that she has cleaved to me for better, for worse; and if the balance has been against her hitherto, it was a noble trade.

I am stupid and lose myself in what I write. I write rather what answers to my feelings (which are sometimes sharp enough) than express my present ones, for I am only flat and stupid.

Poor Miss Stoddart! she is coming to England under the notion of passing her time between her mother and Mary, between London and Salisbury. Since she talk'd of coming, word has been sent to Malta that her Mother is gone out of her mind. This Letter, with mine to Stoddart with an account of Allen's

death, &c., has miscarried (taken by the French) [*word missing*]. She is coming home, with no soul to receive [*words missing*]. She has not a woman-friend in London.

I am sure you will excuse my writing [any more, I] am very poorly. I cannot resist tra[nscribing] three or four Lines which poor Mary made upon a Picture (a Holy Family) which we saw at an Auction only one week before she left home. She was then beginning to show signs of ill boding. They are sweet Lines, and upon a sweet Picture. But I send them, only as the last memorial of her.

VIRGIN AND CHILD. L. DA VINCI

Maternal Lady with the Virgin-grace,
Heaven-born thy Jesus seemeth sure,
And thou a virgin pure.
Lady most perfect, when thy angel face
Men look upon, they wish to be
A Catholic, Madona fair, to worship thee.

You had her lines about the 'Lady Blanch.' You have not had some which she wrote upon a copy of a girl from Titian, which I had hung up where that print of Blanch and the Abbess (as she beautifully interpreted two female figures from L. da Vinci) had hung, in our room. 'Tis light and pretty.

Who art thou, fair one, who usurp'st the place
Of Blanch, the Lady of the matchless grace?
Come, fair and pretty, tell to me
Who in thy lifetime thou mightst be?
Thou pretty art and fair,
But with the Lady Blanch thou never must compare.
No need for Blanch her history to tell,
Whoever saw her face, they there did read it well.
But when I look on thee, I only know
There liv'd a pretty maid some hundred years ago.

This is a little unfair, to tell so much about ourselves, and to advert so little to your letter, so full of comfortable tidings of you all. But my own cares press pretty close upon me, and you can make allowance. That you may go on gathering strength and peace is the next wish to Mary's recovery.

I had almost forgot your repeated invitation. Supposing that Mary will be well and able, there is another *ability* which you may guess at, which I cannot promise myself. In prudence we ought not to come. This illness will make it still more prudential to wait. It is not a balance of this way of spending our money against another way, but an absolute question of whether we shall stop now, or go on wasting away the little we have got beforehand, which my wise conduct has already incroach'd upon one half. My best Love, however, to you all; and to that most friendly creature, Mrs. Clarkson, and better health to her, when you see or write to her.

C. LAMB.

[The reference to Miss Stoddart is explained later.

Mary Lamb's two poems were included in the *Works*, 1818. *Lady Blanch* is the poem quoted on page 371.]

170. TO THOMAS MANNING

[Dated by Mr. Hazlitt: 27th July 1805.]

DEAR ARCHIMEDES,

Things have gone on badly with thy ungeometrical friend; but they are on the turn. My old housekeeper has shown signs of convalescence, and will shortly resume the power of the keys, so I shan't be cheated of my tea and liquors. Wind in the west, which promotes tranquillity. Have leisure now to anticipate seeing thee again. Have been taking leave of tobacco in a rhyming address. Had thought *that vein* had long since closed up. But the L—d opened Sara's bag after years of unproduction. Find I can rhyme and reason too. Think of studying mathematics, to restrain the fire of my genius, which G. D. recommends. Have frequent bleedings at the nose, which shows plethoric. Maybe shall try the sea myself, that great scene of wonders. Got incredibly sober and regular; shave oftener, and hum a tune, to signify cheerfulness and gallantry.

Suddenly disposed to sleep, having taken a quart of pease with bacon and stout. Will not refuse Nature, who has done such things for me!

Nurse, don't call me unless Mr. Manning comes.—What, the gentleman in spectacles? Yes.

Dormit.

C. L.

Saturday,
Hot Noon.

['Have been taking leave of tobacco.' On 10th August 1824 we shall find Lamb telling Hood that he designs to give up smoking.]

171. MARY LAMB TO SARAH STODDART

[? 18th September 1805.]

MY DEAR SARAH,

I have made many attempts at writing to you, but it has always brought your troubles and my own so strongly into my mind, that I have been obliged to leave off, and make Charles write for me. I am resolved now, however few lines I write, this shall go; for I know, my kind friend, you will like once more to see my own handwriting.

I have been for these few days past in rather better spirits, so that I begin almost to feel myself once more a living creature, and to hope for happier times; and in that hope I include the prospect of once more seeing my dear Sarah in peace and comfort in our old garret. How did I wish for your presence to cheer my drooping heart when I returned home from banishment.

Is your being with, or near, your poor dear Mother necessary to her comfort? does she take any notice of you? and is there any prospect of her recovery? How I grieve for her and for you. . . .

I went to the Admiralty about your Mother's pension; from thence I was directed to an office in Lincoln's Inn, where they are paid. They informed me at the office that it could not be paid to any person except Mr. Wray, without a letter of attorney from your Mother; and as the stamp for that will cost one pound, it will, perhaps, be better to leave it till Mr. Wray comes to town, if he does come before Christmas; they tell me it can be received any Thursday between this and Christmas. If you send up a letter of Attorney, let it be in my name. If you think, notwithstanding their positive assurance to the contrary, that you can put

me in any way of getting it without, let me know. Are you acquainted with Mr. Pearce, and will my taking another letter from you to him be of any service? or will a letter from Mr. Wray be of any use?—though I fear not, for they said at the office they had orders to pay no pension without a letter of Attorney. The attestation you sent up, they said, was sufficient, and that the same must be sent every year. Do not let us neglect this business; and make use of me in any way you can.

I have much to thank you and your kind brother for; I kept the dark silk, as you may suppose: you have made me very fine; the broche is very beautiful. Mrs. Jeffries wept for gratitude when she saw your present; she desires all manner of thanks and good wishes. Your maid's sister was gone to live a few miles from town; Charles, however, found her out, and gave her the handkerchief.

I want to know if you have seen William, and if there is any prospect in future there. All you said in your letter from Portsmouth that related to him was burnt so in the fumigating, that we could only make out that it was unfavourable, but not the particulars; tell us again how you go on, and if you have seen him: I conceit affairs will some how be made up between you at last.

I want to know how your brother goes on. Is he likely to make a very good fortune, and in how long a time? And how is he, in the way of home comforts?—I mean, is he very happy with Mrs. Stoddart? This was a question I could not ask while you were there, and perhaps is not a fair one now; but I want to know how you all went on—and, in short, twenty little foolish questions that one ought, perhaps, rather to ask when we meet, than to write about. But do make me a little acquainted with the inside of the good Doctor's house, and what passes therein.

Was Coleridge often with you? or did your brother and Col. argue long arguments, till between the two great argueers there grew a little coolness?—or perchance the mighty friendship between Coleridge and your Sovereign Governor, Sir Alexander Ball, might create a kind of jealousy, for we fancy something of a coldness did exist, from the little mention ever made of C. in your brother's letters.

Write us, my good girl, a long, gossiping letter, answering all

these foolish questions—and tell me any silly thing you can recollect—any, the least particular, will be interesting to us, and we will never tell tales out of school: but we used to wonder and wonder, how you all went on; and when you was coming home we said, ‘Now we shall hear all from Sarah.’

God bless you, my dear friend.

I am ever your affectionate

MARY LAMB.

If you have sent Charles any commissions he has not executed, write me word—he says he has lost or mislaid a letter desiring him to inquire about a wig.

Write two letters—one of business and pensions, and one all about Sarah Stoddart and Malta. Is Mr. Moncrieff doing well there?

Wednesday morning.

We have got a picture of Charles; do you think your brother would like to have it? If you do, can you put us in a way how to send it?

[Mrs. Stoddart was the widow of a lieutenant in the Royal Navy. ‘In the 1799 and 1808 Directories,’ says Mrs. Anderson, ‘William Pearce is among the clerks on the Establishment at the Admiralty Office, Charing X, but no name of Wray—would he be Mr. Stoddart’s solicitor?’

‘William’ is still the early William—not William Hazlitt, whom Sarah was destined to marry.

Mr. Moncrieff was in the Admiralty Court at Malta.

The picture of Charles might be some kind of reproduction of Hazlitt’s portrait of him, painted in the preceding year; but more probably, I think, a few copies of Hancock’s drawing, made in 1798 for Cottle, and now in the National Portrait Gallery, had been struck off.]

172. CHARLES LAMB TO WILLIAM AND DOROTHY WORDSWORTH

[P.M. 28th September 1805.]

My dear Wordsworth (or Dorothy rather, for to you appertains the biggest part of this answer by right.)—I will not again deserve reproach by so long a silence. I have kept deluding myself with the idea that Mary would write to you, but she is so lazy, or, I

believe the true state of the case, so diffident, that it must revert to me as usual. Though she writes a pretty good style, and has some notion of the force of words, she is not always so certain of the true orthography of them, and that and a poor handwriting (in this age of female calligraphy) often deter her where no other reason does. We have neither of us been very well for some weeks past. I am very nervous, and she most so at those times when I am: so that a merry friend, adverting to the noble consolation we were able to afford each other, denominated us not unaptly Gum Boil and Tooth Ache: for they use to say that a Gum Boil is a great relief to a Tooth Ache. We have been two tiny excursions this summer, for three or four days each: to a place near Harrow, and to Egham, where Cooper's Hill is: and that is the total history of our Rustications this year. Alas! how poor a sound to Skiddaw, and Helvellyn, and Borrodaile, and the magnificent sesquipedalia of the year 1802. Poor old Molly! to have lost her pride, that 'last infirmity of Noble Mind,' and her Cow—Providence need not have set her wits to such an old Molly. I am heartily sorry for her. Remember us lovingly to her. And in particular remember us to Mrs. Clarkson in the most kind manner. I hope by southwards you mean that she will be at or near London, for she is a great favorite of both of us, and we feel for her health as much as is possible for any one to do. She is one of the friendliest, comfortablest women we know, and made our little stay at your cottage one of the pleasantest times we ever past. We were quite strangers to her. Mr. C. is with you too?—our kindest separate remembrances to him.

As to our special affairs, I am looking about me. I have done nothing since the beginning of last year, when I lost my newspaper job, and having had a long idleness, I must do something, or we shall get very poor. Sometimes I think of a farce—but hitherto all schemes have gone off,—an idle brag or two of an evening vapping out of a pipe, and going off in the morning; but now I have bid farewell to my 'Sweet Enemy' Tobacco, as you will see in my next page, I perhaps shall set soberly to work. Hang Work! I wish that all the year were holyday. I am sure that Indolence indefeazible Indolence is the true state of man, and business the invention of the Old Teazer who persuaded Adam's Master to give him an apron and set him a houghing. Pen and

Ink, and Clerks, and desks, were the refinements of this old torturer a thousand years after, under pretence of Commerce allying distant shores, promoting and diffusing knowledge, good, &c.—

A FAREWELL TO TOBACCO

May the Babylonish curse
Strait confound my stammering verse,
If I can a passage see
In this word-perplexity,
Or a fit expression find,
Or a language to my mind,
(Still the phrase is wide an acre)
To take leave of thee, Tobacco;
Or in any terms relate
Half my Love, or half my Hate,
For I hate yet love thee so,
That, whichever Thing I shew,
The plain truth will seem to be
A constrain'd hyperbole,
And the passion to proceed
More from a Mistress than a Weed.

Sooty retainer to the vine,
Bacchus' black servant, negro fine,
Sorcerer that mak'st us doat upon
Thy begrim'd complexion,
And, for thy pernicious sake
More and greater oaths to break
Than reclaimed Lovers take
'Gainst women: Thou thy siege dost lay
Much too in the female way,
While thou suck'st the labouring breath
Faster than kisses; or than Death.
Thou in such a cloud dost bind us,
That our worst foes cannot find us,
And Ill Fortune (that would thwart us)
Shoots at rovers, shooting at us;
While each man thro' thy heightening steam,
Does like a smoking Etna seem,
And all about us does express
(Fancy and Wit in richest dress)
A Sicilian Fruitfulness.

Thou through such a mist dost shew us,
That our best friends do not know us;

And, for those allowed features,
Due to reasonable creatures,
Liken'st us to fell Chimeras,
Monsters, that, who see us, fear us,
Worse than Cerberus, or Geryon,
Or, who first loved a cloud, Ixion.

Bacchus we know, and we allow
His tipsy rites. But what art thou?
That but by reflex canst shew
What his deity can do,
As the false Egyptian spell
Aped the true Hebrew miracle—
Some few vapours thou may'st raise,
The weak brain may serve to amaze,
But to the reins and nobler heart
Canst nor life nor heat impart.

Brother of Bacchus, later born,
The old world was sure forlorn,
Wanting thee; that aidest more
The God's victories than before
All his panthers, and the brawls
Of his piping Bacchanals;
These, as stale, we disallow,
Or judge of *thee* meant: only thou
His true Indian Conquest art;
And, for Ivy round his dart,
The reformed God now weaves
A finer Thyrsus of thy leaves.

Scent to match thy rich perfume
Chymic art did ne'er presume
Through her quaint alembic strain;
None so sovran to the brain.
Nature, that did in thee excell,
Framed again no second smell.
Roses, violets, but toys
For the smaller sort of boys,
Or for greener damsels meant;
Thou'rt the only manly scent.

Stinking'st of the stinking kind,
Filth of the mouth and fog of the mind,
Africa that brags her foyson,
Breeds no such prodigious poison,
Henbane, nightshade, both together,
Hemlock, aconite——

Nay rather,
Plant divine, of rarest virtue,
Blisters on the tongue would hurt you;
'Twas but in a sort I blamed thee,
None e'er prosper'd who defamed thee:
Irony all, and feign'd abuse,
Such as perplex Lovers use
At a need, when in despair
To paint forth their fairest fair,
Or in part but to express
That exceeding comeliness
Which their fancies does so strike,
They borrow language of Dislike,
And instead of Dearest Miss,
Honey, Jewel, Sweetheart, Bliss,
And, those forms of old admiring,
Call her Cockatrice and Syren,
Basilisk and all that's evil,
Witch, Hyena, Mermaid, Devil,
Ethiop wench and Blackamoor,
Monkey, Ape, and twenty more,
Friendly Traitor, Loving Foe:
Not that she is truly so,
But no other way they know
A contentment to express,
Borders so upon excess,
That they do not rightly wor,
Whether it be pain or not.

Or, as men, constrain'd to part
With what's nearest to their heart,
While their sorrow's at the height,
Lose discrimination quite,
And their hasty wrath let fall,
To appease their frantic gall,
On the darling thing whatever,
Whence they feel it death to sever,
Though it be, as they, perforce,
Guiltless of the sad divorce.

For I must (nor let it grieve thee,
Friendliest of plants, that I must) leave thee
For thy sake, TOBACCO, I
Would do anything but die;
And but seek to extend my days
Long enough to sing thy praise.
But, as She, who once has been

A King's consort, is a Queen,
 Ever after; nor will bate
 Any tittle of her state,
 Though a widow, or divorced,
 So I, from thy converse forced,
 The old name and style retain,
 (A right Katherine of Spain;)
 And a seat too 'mongst the joys
 Of the blest Tobacco Boys:
 Where though I by sour physician
 Am debarr'd the full fruition
 Of thy favours, I may catch
 Some collateral sweets, and snatch
 Sidelong odours, that give life
 Like glances from a neighbour's wife;
 And still dwell in the by-places,
 And the suburbs of thy graces,
 And in thy borders take delight,
 An unconquer'd Canaanite.

I wish you may think this a handsome farewell to my 'Friendly Traitor.' Tobacco has been my evening comfort and my morning curse for these five years: and you know how difficult it is from refraining to pick one's lips even, when it has become a habit. This Poem is the only one which I have finished since so long as when I wrote 'Hester Savory.' I have had it in my head to do it these two years, but Tobacco stood in its own light when it gave me head aches that prevented my singing its praises. Now you have got it, you have got all my store, for I have absolutely not another line. No more has Mary. We have nobody about us that cares for Poetry, and who will rear grapes when he shall be the sole eater? Perhaps if you encourage us to shew you what we may write, we may do something now and then before we absolutely forget the quantity of an English line for want of practice. The 'Tobacco,' being a little in the way of Withers (whom Southey so much likes) perhaps you will somehow convey it to him with my kind remembrances. Then, everybody will have seen it that I wish to see it: I have sent it to Malta.

I remain Dear W. and D— yours truly,

C. LAMB.

28th Sep., 1805.

['Last infirmity of Noble Mind.' *Lycidas*, line 70; correctly quoted for once.
 'Hang Work.' This paragraph is the germ of the sonnet entitled *Work*,

which Lamb wrote fourteen years later (see the letter to Bernard Barton, 11th September 1822). He seems always to have kept his thoughts in sight.

The *Farewell to Tobacco* was printed in the *Reflector*, No. IV, 1811 or 1812, and then in the *Works*, 1818. Lamb's farewell was frequently repeated; but it is a question whether he ever entirely left off smoking. Talfourd says that he did; but in 1826 there is evidence that he smoked for an hour with Taylor and Hessey's servant, on returning to Islington after a *London Magazine* dinner; and Mrs. Coe, who remembered Lamb at Widford very late in his life, credited him with the company of a black clay pipe. It was Lamb who, when Dr. Parr asked him how he managed to emit so much smoke, replied that he had toiled after it as other men after virtue. And Macready relates that he remarked in his presence that he wished to draw his last breath through a pipe and exhale it in a pun.

In lines 7 and 8 the endings, 'wide an acre' and 'Tobacco,' were changed to 'wide or scant' and 'Great Plant.'

'Hester Savory.' See the poem on page 336.]

173. MARY LAMB TO SARAH STODDART

[Early November 1805.]

MY DEAR SARAH,

Certainly you are the best letter-writer (besides writing the best hand) in the world. I have just been reading over again your two long letters, and I perceive they make me very envious. I have taken a bran new pen, and put on my *spectacles*, and am peering with all my might to see the lines in the paper, which the sight of your even lines had well nigh tempted me to rule: and I have moreover taken two pinches of snuff extraordinary, to clear my head, which feels more cloudy than common this fine, cheerful morning.

All I can gather from your clear and, I have no doubt, faithful history of Maltese politics is, that the good Doctor, though a firm friend an excellent fancier of brooches, a good husband, an upright Advocate, and, in short, all that they say upon tomb stones (for I do not recollect that they celebrate any fraternal virtues there) yet is but a *moody* brother, that your sister in law is pretty much like what all sisters in law have been since the first happy invention of the happy marriage state; that friend Coleridge has undergone no alteration by crossing the Atlantic,

—for his friendliness to you, as well as all the oddities you mention, are just what one ought to look for from him; and that you, my dear Sarah, have proved yourself just as unfit to flourish in a little, proud Garrison Town as I did shrewdly suspect you were before you went there.

If I possibly can, I will prevail upon Charles to write to your brother by the conveyance you mention; but he is so unwell, I almost fear the fortnight will slip away before I can get him in the right vein. Indeed, it has been sad and heavy times with us lately: when I am pretty well, his low spirits throws me back again; and when he begins to get a little chearful, then I do the same kind office for him. I heartily wish for the arrival of Coleridge; a few such evenings as we have sometimes passed with him would wind us up, and set us a going again.

Do not say any thing, when you write, of our low spirits—it will vex Charles. You would laugh, or you would cry, perhaps both, to see us sit together, looking at each other with long and rueful faces, and saying, ‘how do you do?’ and ‘how do you do?’ and then we fall a-crying, and say we will be better on the morrow. He says we are like toothach and his friend gum bile—which, though a kind of ease, is but an uneasy kind of ease, a comfort of rather an uncomfortable sort.

I rejoice to hear of your Mother’s amendment; when you can leave her with any satisfaction to yourself—which, as her sister, I think I understand by your letters, is with her, I hope you may soon be able to do—let me know upon what plan you mean to come to Town. Your brother proposed your being six months in Town, and six with your Mother; but he did not then know of your poor Mother’s illness. By his desire, I enquired for a respectable family for you, to board with; and from Capt^a. Burney I heard of one I thought would suit you at that time. He particularly desires I would not think of your being with us, not thinking, I conjecture, the home of a single man *respectable* enough. Your brother gave me most unlimited orders to domineer over you, to be the inspector of all your actions, and to direct and govern you with a stern voice and a high hand, to be, in short, a very elder brother over you—does not the hearing of this, my meek pupil, make you long to come to London? I am making all the proper enquiries against the time of the newest and most

approved modes (being myself mainly ignorant in these points) of etiquette, and nicely correct maidenly manners.

But to speak seriously. I mean, when we mean [? meet], that we will lay our heads together, and consult and contrive the best way of making the best girl in the world the fine Lady her brother wishes to see her; and believe me, Sarah, it is not so difficult a matter as one is sometimes apt to imagine. I have observed many a demure Lady, who passes muster admirably well, who, I think, we could easily learn to imitate in a week or two. We will talk of these things when we meet. In the mean time, I give you free license to be happy and merry at Salisbury in any way you can. Has the partridge-season opened any communication between you and William—as I allow you to be imprudent till I see you, I shall expect to hear you have invited him to taste his own birds. Have you scratched him out of your will yet? Rickman is married, and that is all the news I have to send you.

Your Wigs were sent by Mr. Varvell about five months ago; therefore, he could have arrived when you came away.

I seem, upon looking over my letter again, to have written too lightly of your distresses at Malta; but, however I may have written, believe me, I enter very feelingly into all your troubles. I love you, and I love your brother; and between you, both of whom I think have been to blame, I know not what to say—only this I say, try to think as little as possible of past miscarriages; it was, perhaps, so ordered by Providence, that you might return home to be a comfort to your poor Mother. And do not, I conjure you, let her unhappy malady afflict you too deeply. I speak from experience, and from the opportunity I have had of much observation in such cases, that insane people, in the fancy's they take into their heads, do not feel as one in a sane state of mind does under the real evil of poverty, the perception of having done wrong, or any such thing that runs in their heads.

Think as little as you can, and let your whole care be to be certain that she is treated with *tenderness*. I lay a stress upon this, because it is a thing of which people in her state are uncommonly susceptible, and which hardly any one is at all aware of: a hired nurse *never*, even though in all other respects they are good kind of people. I do not think your own presence necessary, unless

she *takes to you very much*, except for the purpose of seeing with your own eyes that she is very kindly treated.

I do so long to see you! God bless and comfort you!

Yours affectionately,

M. LAMB.

[Miss Stoddart had now returned to England, to her mother at Salisbury, who had been and was very ill. Coleridge meanwhile had had coolnesses with Stoddart and had transferred himself to the roof of the Governor.

'Comfort.' This is the earlier spelling of 'comfort,' following the Latin derivation.

Rickman married, on 30th October 1805, Susanna Postlethwaite of Harting, in Sussex.]

174. CHARLES LAMB TO WILLIAM HAZLITT

November 10, 1805.

DEAR HAZLITT,

I was very glad to hear from you, and that your journey was so *picturesque*. We miss you, as we foretold we should. One or two things have happened, which are beneath the dignity of epistolary communication, but which, seated about our fire at night, (the winter hands of pork have begun) gesture and emphasis might have talked into some importance. Something about Rickman's wife, for instance: how tall she is and that she visits prank'd out like a Queen of the May with green streamers—a good-natured woman though, which is as much as you can expect from a friend's wife, whom you got acquainted with a bachelor. Some things too about MONKEY, which can't so well be written—how it set up for a fine Lady, and thought it had got Lovers, and was obliged to be convinc'd of its age from the parish register, where it was proved to be only twelve; and an edict issued that it should not give itself airs yet these four years; and how it got leave to be called Miss, by grace;—these and such like Hows were in my head to tell you, but who can write? Also how Manning's come to town in spectacles, and studies physic; is melancholy and seems to have something in his head, which he don't impart. Then, how I am going to leave off smoking. O la! your Leonardos of Oxford made my mouth water. I was hurried thro' the gallery, and they escaped me. What do I say? I was a Goth then, and should not have noticed

them. I had not settled my notions of Beauty. I have now for ever!—the small head, the [*here is drawn a long narrow eye*] long Eye,—that sort of peering curve, the wicked Italian mischief! the stick-at-nothing, Herodias'-daughter kind of grace. You understand me. But you disappoint me, in passing over in absolute silence the Blenheim Leonardo. Didn't you see it? Excuse a Lover's curiosity. I have seen no pictures of note since, except Mr. Dawe's gallery. It is curious to see how differently two great men treat the same subject, yet both excellent in their way: for instance, Milton and Mr. Dawe. Mr. Dawe has chosen to illustrate the story of Sampson exactly in the point of view in which Milton has been most happy: the interview between the Jewish Hero, blind and captive, and Dalilah. Milton has imagined his Locks grown again, strong as horse-hair or porcupine's bristles; doubtless shaggy and black, as being hairs 'which of a nation armed contained the strength.' I don't remember, he *says* black: but could Milton imagine them to be yellow? Do you? Mr. Dawe with striking originality of conception has crowned him with a thin yellow wig, in colour precisely like Dyson's, in curl and quantity resembling Mrs. Professor's, his Limbs rather stout, about such a man as my Brother or Rickman—but no Atlas nor Hercules, nor yet so bony as Dubois, the Clown of Sadler's Wells. This was judicious, taking the spirit of the story rather than the fact: for doubtless God could communicate national salvation to the trust of flax and tow as well as hemp and cordage, and could draw down a Temple with a golden tress as soon as with all the cables of the British Navy.—Miss Dawe is about a portrait of sulky Fanny Imlay, alias Godwin: but Miss Dawe is of opinion that her subject is neither reserved nor sullen, and doubtless she will persuade the picture to be of the same opinion. However, the features are tolerably like—Too much of Dawes! Wasn't you sorry for Lord Nelson? I have followed him in fancy ever since I saw him walking in Pall Mall (I was prejudiced against him before) looking just as a Hero should look; and I have been very much cut about it indeed. He was the only pretence of a Great Man we had. Nobody is left of any Name at all. His Secretary died by his side. I imagined him, a Mr. Scott, to be the man you met at Hume's; but I learn from Mrs. Hume that it is not the same. I met

Mrs. H. one day, and agreed to go on the Sunday to Tea, but the rain prevented us, and the distance. I have been to apologise, and we are to dine there the first fine Sunday. Strange perverseness! I never went while you staid here, and now I go to find you! What other news is there, Mary?—What puns have I made in the last fortnight? You never remember them. You have no relish for the Comic. 'O! tell Hazlitt not to forget to send the American Farmer. I dare say it isn't so good as he fancies; but a Book's a Book.' I have not heard from Wordsworth or from Malta since. Charles Kemble, it seems, enters into possession to-morrow. We sup at 109 Russell St. this evening. I wish your brother wouldn't drink. It's a blemish in the greatest characters. You send me a modern quotation poetical. How do you like this in an old play? Vittoria Corombona, a spunky Italian Lady, a Leonardo one, nick-named the White Devil, being on her trial for murder, &c.—and questioned about seducing a Duke from his wife and the State, makes answer:

Condemn you me for that the Duke did love me?
So may you blame some fair and chrystal river,
For that some melancholic distracted man
Hath drown'd himself in it.—

Our ticket was a £20. Alas!! are both yours blanks?

P.S.—Godwin has asked after you several times.

N.B.—I shall expect a Line from you, if but a bare Line, whenever you write to Russell St., and a Letter often when you do not. I pay no postage; but I will have consideration for you until parliament time and franks. Luck to Ned Search and the new art of colouring. Monkey sends her Love and Mary especially.

Yours truly,

C. LAMB.

[Addressed to Hazlitt at Wem. This is the first letter from Lamb to Hazlitt that has been preserved. The two men first met at Godwin's. Holcroft and Coleridge were disputing which was best—man as he was, or man as he is to be. Lamb broke in with, 'Give me man as he ought not to be.'

Hazlitt at this date was twenty-six, some three years younger than Lamb. He had just abandoned his project of being a painter and was settling down to literary work.

'Rickman's wife.' This passage holds the germ of Lamb's essay on 'The Behaviour of Married Persons,' first printed in the *Reflector*, No. IV, in 1811 or 1812, and afterwards included with the *Elia* essays.

'Monkey' was Louisa Martin, a little girl of whom Lamb was fond and whom he knew to the end of his life.

Manning studied medicine at the Westminster Hospital for six months previous to May 1806.

'The Leonardos of Oxford . . . the Blenheim Leonardo.' The only Leonardos at Oxford are the drawings at Christ Church. The Blenheim Leonardo was probably Boltraffio's 'Virgin and Child,' which used to be ascribed to Da Vinci, as indeed were many pictures he never painted. Hazlitt subsequently wrote sketches of the Picture Galleries of England.

'Mr. Dawe's gallery.' George Dawe (1781-1829), afterwards R.A., of whom Lamb wrote his essay, 'Recollections of a Late Royal Academician,' where he alludes again to the picture of Samson.

'Dyson's.' Dyson was a friend of Godwin.

'Miss Dawe.' I know nothing further of George Dawe's sister. Fanny Imlay was the unfortunate daughter of Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin (by Gilbert Imlay, the author). She committed suicide in 1816.

Nelson was killed on 21st October 1805. Scott was his chaplain, and he was not killed.

Hume was Joseph Hume, an official at Somerset House, whom we shall meet again directly.

'The American Farmer.' *Letters of an American Farmer*, by J. Hector St. John. This was the book which Hazlitt praised and which Mary Lamb wanted to read. Crèvecoeur was not a pseudonym, but the author's real name, which never appeared upon the book. The book was published in London in 1782, and was one of the most influential books of its time.

Charles Kemble, brother of John Philip Kemble and father of Fanny Kemble.

John Hazlitt, the miniature painter, lived at 109 Russell Street.

Lamb's quotation, afterwards included in his *Dramatic Specimens*, 1808, is from Webster's *The White Devil*, Act III, Scene 1.

The £20 ticket was presumably in the Lottery. Lamb's essay, 'The Illustrious Defunct,' shows him to have been interested in lotteries; and in a letter on 7th November 1809 Mary Lamb states that he wrote lottery puffs.

'Ned Search.' Hazlitt was engaged on an abridgment of *The Light of Nature Pursued*, in seven volumes, 1768-78, nominally by Edward Search, but really by Abraham Tucker.

'The new art of colouring' is a reference, I fancy, to Tingry's *Painter's and Varnisher's Guide*, 1804, mentioned again later.]

175. MARY LAMB TO SARAH STODDART

[9th and 14th November 1805.]

MY DEAR SARAH,

After a very feverish night, I writ a letter to you; and I have been distressed about it ever since. In the first place, I have

thought I treated too lightly your differences with your brother—which I freely enter into and feel for, but which I rather wished to defer saying much about till we meet. But that which gives me most concern is the way in which I talked about your Mother's illness, and which I have since feared you might construe into my having a doubt of your showing her proper attention without my impertinent interference. God knows, nothing of this kind was ever in my thoughts; but I have entered very deeply into your affliction with regard to your Mother; and while I was wishing, the many poor souls in the kind of desponding way she is in, whom I have seen, came afresh into my mind; and all the mismanagement with which I have seen them treated was strong in my mind, and I wrote under a forcible impulse, which I could not at that time resist, but I have fretted so much about it since, that I think it is the last time I will ever let my pen run away with me.

Your kind heart will, I know, even if you have been a little displeased, forgive me, when I assure you my spirits have been so much hurt by my last illness, that at times I hardly know what I do. I do not mean to alarm you about myself, or to plead an excuse; but I am very much otherwise than you have always known me. I do not think any one perceives me altered, but I have lost all self-confidence in my own actions, and one cause of my low spirits is, that I never feel satisfied with any thing I do—a perception of not being in a sane state perpetually haunts me. I am ashamed to confess this weakness to you; which, as I am so sensible of, I ought to strive to conquer. But I tell you, that you may excuse any part of my letter that has given offence: for your not answering it, when you are such a punctual correspondent, has made me very uneasy.

Write immediately, my dear Sarah, but do not notice this letter, nor do not mention any thing I said relative to your poor Mother. Your handwriting will convince me you are friends with me; and if Charles, who must see my letter, was to know I had first written foolishly, and then fretted about the event of my folly, he would both ways be angry with me.

I would desire you to direct to me at home, but your hand is so well known to Charles, that that would not do. Therefore, take no notice of my megrums till we meet, which I most ardently

long to do. An hour spent in your company would be a cordial to my drooping heart.

Pray write directly, and believe me, ever

Your affectionate friend,

M. LAMB.

Nov. 14.—I have kept this by me till to-day, hoping every day to hear from you. If you found the seal a clumsy one, it is because I opened the wafer.

Write, I beg, by the return of the post; and as I am very anxious to hear whether you are, as I fear, dissatisfied with me, you shall, if you please, direct my letter to Nurse. Her direction is, Mrs. Grant, at Mr. Smith's, *Maidenhead*, Ram Court, Fleet Street.

I was not able, you know, to notice, when I writ to Malta, your letter concerning an insult you received from a vile wretch there; and as I mostly show my letters to Charles, I have never named it since. Did it ever come to your brother's knowledge? Charles and I were very uneasy at your account of it. I wish I could see you.

Yours ever,

M. LAMB.

I do not mean to continue a secret correspondence, but you must oblige me with this one letter. In future I will always show my letters before they go, which will be a proper check upon my wayward pen.

176. CHARLES LAMB TO THOMAS MANNING

[P.M. 15th November 1805.]

DEAR MANNING,

Certainly you could not have called at all hours from two till ten, for we have been only out of an evening Monday and Tuesday in this week. But if you think you have, your thought shall go for the deed.

We did pray for you on Wednesday night. Oysters unusually luscious—pearls of extraordinary magnitude found in them. I have made bracelets of them—given them in clusters to Ladies. Last night we went out in despite, because you were not come at your hour.

This night we shall be at home, so shall we certainly both Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday. Take your choice, mind I don't say of one, but choose which evening you will not, and come the other four. Doors open at five o'clock. Shells forced about nine. Every gentleman smokes or not as he pleases. O! I forgot, bring the £10, for fear you should lose it. C. L.

[Manning was in England in 1805; it was not till spring 1806 that he at last set sail for China. This letter is addressed to him at 14 Broad Street, Golden Square.]

177. MARY LAMB TO MRS. CLARKSON

Dec. 25, 1805.

MY DEAR MRS. CLARKSON,

I feel myself greatly obliged to you for your kind letter. The favorable account you give of your own health has afforded me the sincerest pleasure.

We wished ourselves with you at Grasmere. I rejoice to find both by yours, and Miss Wordsworth's last letter, that they have so wonderfully borne up under their sad affliction. We have heard no more of Coleridge. I will certainly write the instant I hear of him. I have not the most distant idea where it is probable he will land.

This is Christmas-day; it is a fine, cheerful morning, and I feel a kind of satisfaction that a sad, and dreary year, as this has been to me, and many of my best friends, is drawing to an end. In the usual compliments of this time of the year to you, and Mr. Clarkson, I include a wish and hope, that we shall meet in the course of the ensuing year, with you, together with our kind Grasmere friends, and Coleridge—How this happy meeting is to be brought about I know not; but I have a strong faith it will somehow happen.

My brother, who has been in an indifferent state of health lately, is tolerably well recovered and joins me in respects to Mr. Clarkson and yourself not forgetting our fellow-traveller Miss Buck, and our old friend Tom, whom we do not like a bit the worse for being a little tall, a little awkward, and not over passionately addicted to literature.

Excuse this short return to your long, and interesting letter,

but we have no common friends in town, to amuse you with particulars of in return. Whenever you shall feel yourself well enough to favor us with a line, we shall take it particularly kind.

Charles wants to hear about Mr. Clarkson's quaker book, in what state of forwardness it is.

I remain, dear Mrs. C.—

Your affectionate friend,

M. LAMB.

[Mrs. Anderson's notes on this letter :

Mary calls 1805 'a sad and dreary year' for the following reasons, which can all be found in the letters.

(1) Charles was poorly and low spirited at the beginning of the year.

(2) Both he and Mary were greatly grieved and shocked at the death of Wordsworth's brother John, captain of the *Abergavenney*, which sank at 11 p.m. on the night of 5th February 1805. John was drowned, and Charles took immense trouble to collect accounts from survivors, especially to disprove the story that John made no effort to save himself.

(3) They were very anxious about Coleridge, who was at Malta, and whose letters to England miscarried.

(4) Lamb's old schoolfellow, Bob Allen, died suddenly, early in the year.

(5) Mary was taken ill on 3rd June, and was away at any rate till the end of July, probably rather longer. And when she came home she suffered from depression and loss of self-confidence, as she did twenty-five years later. Charles too was seedy in September, so that a 'merry friend' nicknamed him and Mary 'Gumboil and Toothache.'

Mrs. Clarkson had also been ill that year, but she managed to call and see Mary at the beginning of May, when she was in town. Her son Tom, b. 1797, would be eight years old.

Tom was the Clarksons' only son, who became a London magistrate, and was killed in an accident in 1837 in his fortieth year.

Clarkson's 'Quaker book' was *A Portraiture of Quakerism*, 1806. Later he wrote a *Life of William Penn*, 1813. He himself was not a Quaker.]

178. CHARLES LAMB TO WILLIAM HAZLITT

Thursday, 15th Jan., 1806.

DEAR HAZLITT,

Godwin went to Johnson's yesterday about your business. Johnson would not come down, or give any answer, but has promised to open the manuscript, and to give you an answer in one month. Godwin will punctually go again (Wednesday is Johnson's open day) yesterday four weeks next: *i.e.* in one lunar

month from this time. Till when Johnson positively declines giving any answer. I wish you joy on ending your Search. Mrs. H. was naming something about a Life of Fawcett, to be by you undertaken: the great Fawcett, as she explain'd to Manning, when he ask'd, *What Fawcett?* He innocently thought *Fawcett the player*. But Fawcett the Divine is known to many people, albeit unknown to the Chinese Enquirer. I should think, if you liked it, and Johnson declined it, that Phillips is the man. He is perpetually bringing out Biographies, Richardson, Wilkes, Foot, Lee Lewis, without number: little trim things in two easy volumes price 12s. the two, made up of letters to and from, scraps, posthumous trifles, anecdotes, and about forty pages of hard biography. You might dish up a Fawcettiad in 3 months, and ask 60 or 80 Pounds for it. I should dare say that Phillips would catch at it—I wrote to you the other day in a great hurry. Did you get it? This is merely a Letter of business at Godwin's request.

Lord Nelson is quiet at last. His ghost only keeps a slight fluttering in odes and elegies in newspapers, and impromptus, which could not be got ready before the funeral.

As for news—We have Miss Stoddart in our house, she has been with us a fortnight and will stay a week or so longer. She is one of the few people who are not in the way when they are with you. No tidings of Coleridge. Fenwick is coming to town on Monday (if no kind angel intervene) to surrender himself to prison. He hopes to get the Rules of the Fleet. On the same, or nearly the same, day, Fell, my other quondam co-friend and drinker, will go to Newgate, and his wife and 4 children, I suppose, to the Parish. Plenty of reflection and motives of gratitude to the wise disposer of all things in *us*, whose prudent conduct has hitherto ensured us a warm fire and snug roof over our heads. *Nullum numen abest si sit Prudentia*.

Alas! Prudentia is in the last quarter of her tutelary shining over me. A little time and I——

But may be I may, at last, hit upon some mode of collecting some of the vast superfluities of this money-voiding town. Much is to be got, and I don't want much. All I ask is time and leisure; and I am cruelly off for them.

When you have the inclination, I shall be very glad to have a

letter from you.—Your brother and Mrs. H., I am afraid, think hardly of us for not coming oftener to see them, but we are distracted beyond what they can conceive with visitors and visitings. I never have an hour for my head to work quietly its own workings; which you know is as necessary to the human system as sleep.

Sleep, too, I can't get for these damn'd winds of a night: and without sleep and rest what should ensue? Lunacy. But I trust it won't.

Yours, dear H., mad or sober,

C. LAMB.

[Hazlitt's business was finding a publisher for his abridgment of Search (see page 412). Johnson was Priestley's publisher. A letter to Godwin from Coleridge in June 1803 (see Kegan Paul's *Life of Godwin*, ii. 96) had suggested such an abridgment, Coleridge adding that a friend of his would make it, and that he would write a preface and see the proofs through the press. Hence Godwin's share in the matter. Coleridge's part of the transaction was not carried out.

Lamb at this time must have been seeing much of the Godwins, for he had begun, with his sister, the *Tales from Shakespear* for them, and, as we shall see, had completed *The King and Queen of Hearts*.

Hazlitt's *Life of Joseph Fawcett* (? 1758–1804), the poet and dissenting preacher of Walthamstow and Old Jewry, whom he had known intimately, was not written. The Fawcett of whom Manning, the Chinese Enquirer, was thinking was John Fawcett, famous as Dr. Pangloss and Caleb Quotem.

'The Fleet.' The prison for debtors in Farringdon Street. Closed in 1844. The Rules of the Fleet were the limits within which prisoners for debt were under certain conditions permitted to live: the north side of Ludgate Hill, the Old Bailey up to Fleet Lane, Fleet Lane to Fleet Market, and then back to Ludgate Hill. The Rules cost money: £10 for the first £100 of the debt and for every additional £100, £4. Later, Fenwick settled in America. The Latin quotation is from Juvenal, x. 365, or xiv. 315, meaning that good sense is the one indispensable authority to follow.

There is no date, but the following note may with some propriety come here.]

179. TO MRS. WILLIAM GODWIN

DEAR MRS. G.,

Having observed with some concern that Mr. Godwin is a little fastidious in what he eats for supper, I herewith beg to present his palate with a piece of dried salmon. I am assured it is the best that swims in Trent. If you do not know how to dress it, allow me to add that it should be cut in thin slices and

boiled in paper *previously prepared in butter*. Wishing it exquisite,
 I remain,—Much as before, yours sincerely, C. LAMB.
 Some add *mashed potatoes*.

180. TO WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

[Dated at end: 1st February 1806.]

DEAR WORDSWORTH,

I have seen the Books which you ordered, booked at the White Horse Inn, Cripplegate, by the Kendal waggon this day 1st Febr. 1806; you will not fail to see after them in time. They are directed to you at Grasmere. We have made some alteration in the Editions since your sister's directions. The handsome quarto Spencer which she authorized Mary to buy for £2. 12. 6, when she brought it home in triumph proved to be *only the Fairy Queen*: so we got them to take it again and I have procured instead a Folio, which luckily contains, besides all the Poems, the view of the State of Ireland, which is difficult to meet with. The Spencer, and the Chaucer, being noble old books, we did not think Stockdale's modern volumes would look so well beside them; added to which I don't know whether you are aware that the Print is *excessive small*, same as Eleg. Extracts, or smaller, not calculated for eyes in age; and Shakespear is one of the last books one should like to give up, perhaps the one just before the Dying Service in a large Prayer book. So we have used our own discretion in purchasing Pope's fine Quarto in six volumes, which may be read *ad ultimam horam vitæ*. It is bound like Law Books (rather, half bound) and the Law Robe I have ever thought as comely and gentlemanly a garb as a Book would wish to wear. The state of the purchase then stands thus,

| | | | |
|--------------------|-----|----|-----|
| Urry's Chaucer | £1. | 16 | — |
| Pope's Shakespeare | 2. | 2 | — |
| Spenser | | 14 | — |
| Milton | 1. | 5 | — |
| Packing Case &c. | | 3. | 6 |
| | | 6. | — 6 |

Which your Brother immediately repaid us. He has the Bills for all (by his desire) except the Spenser, which we took no

bill with (not looking to have our accounts audited): so for that and the Case he took a separate receipt for 17/6. N.B. there is writing in the Shakespear: but it is only *variæ lectiones* which some careful gentleman, the former owner, was at the pains to insert in a very neat hand from 5 Commentators. It is no defacement. The fault of Pope's edition is, that he has comically and coxcombically marked the Beauties: which is vile, as if you were to chalk up the cheek and across the nose of a handsome woman in red chalk to shew where the comeliest parts lay. But I hope the noble type and Library-appearance of the Books will atone for that. With the Books come certain Books and Pamphlets of G. Dyer, Presents or rather Decoy-ducks of the Poet to take in his thus-far obliged friends to buy his other works; as he takes care to inform them in M.S. notes to the Title Pages, 'G. Dyer, Author of other Books printed for Longman &c.' The books have lain at your dispatchful brother's a 12 months, to the great staling of most of the subjects. The three Letters and what is else written at the beginning of the respective *Presents* will ascertain the division of the Property. If not, none of the Donees, I dare say, will grudge a community of property in this case. We were constrained to pack 'em how we could, for room. Also there comes W. Hazlitt's book about Human Action, for Coleridge; a little song book for Sarah Coleridge; a Box for Hartley which your Brother was to have sent, but now devolved on us—I don't know from whom it came, but the things altogether were too much for Mr. (I've forgot his name) to take charge of; a Paraphrase on the King and Queen of Hearts, of which I being the Author beg Mr. Johnny Wordsworth's acceptance and opinion. *Liberal Criticism*, as G. Dyer declares, I am always ready to attend to!—And that's all, I believe. N.B. I must remain Debtor to Dorothy for 200 pens: but really Miss Stoddart (women are great gulfs of Stationery), who is going home to Salisbury and has been with us some weeks, has drained us to the very last pen: by the time S. T. C. passes thro' London I reckon I shall be in full feather. No more news has transpired of that Wanderer. I suppose he has found his way to some of his German friends.

A propos of Spencer (you will find him mentioned a page or two before, near enough for an a propos), I was discoursing on

Poetry (as one's apt to deceive oneself, and when a person is willing to *talk* of what one likes, to believe that he also likes the same: as Lovers do) with a Young Gentleman of my office who is deep read in Anacreon Moore, Lord Strangford, and the principal Modern Poets, and I happen'd to mention Epithalamiums and that I could shew him a very fine one of Spencer's. At the mention of this, my Gentleman, who is a very fine Gentleman, and is brother to the Miss Evans who Coleridge so narrowly escaped marrying, pricked up his ears and exprest great pleasure, and begged that I would give him leave to copy it: he did not care how long it was (for I objected the length), he should be very happy to see *any thing by him*. Then pausing, and looking sad, he ejaculated POOR SPENCER! I begged to know the reason of his ejaculation, thinking that Time had by this time softened down any calamities which the Bard might have endured—'Why, poor fellow!' said he, 'he has lost his wife!' 'Lost his wife?' said I, 'Who are you talking of?' 'Why, Spencer,' said he, 'I've read the Monody he wrote on the occasion, and a very *pretty thing it is*.' This led to an explanation (it could be delay'd no longer) that the sound Spencer, which when Poetry is talk'd of generally excites an image of an old Bard in a Ruff, and sometimes with it dim notions of Sir P. Sydney and perhaps Lord Burleigh, had raised in my Gentleman a quite contrary image of The Honourable William Spencer, who has translated some things from the German very prettily, which are publish'd with Lady Di. Beauclerk's Designs.

Nothing like defining of Terms when we talk. What blunders might I have fallen into of quite inapplicable Criticism, but for this timely explanation.

N.B. At the beginning of *Edm. Spencer* (to prevent mistakes) I have copied from my own copy, and primarily from a book of Chalmers on Shakspear, a Sonnet of Spencer's never printed among his poems. It is curious as being manly and rather Miltonic, and as a Sonnet of Spencer's with nothing in it about Love or Knighthood. I have no room for remembrances; but I hope our doing your commission will prove we do not quite forget you.

C. L.

1 Feb., 1806.

[The Chaucer was the edition begun in 1711 by John Urry, completed by others, and published in 1721.

'Eyes in age.' Wordsworth, although only thirty-five, was already having trouble with his sight.

'Hazlitt's book about Human Action, for Coleridge.' *An Essay on the Principles of Human Action*, 1805.

'A Paraphrase on the King and Queen of Hearts.' This was a little verse-book for children by Lamb, illustrated by Mulready and published by T. Hodgkins (for the Godwins) in 1806. It was discovered through this passage in this letter, and has become a sale-room rarity much to be desired. The title ran, *The King and Queen of Hearts, with the Rogueries of the Knave who stole away the Queen's Pies*.

Coleridge had left Malta on 21st September 1805. He went to Naples, and from there to Rome in January 1806, where he stayed until 18th May.

'A propos of Spencer.' This portion of the letter, owing to a mistake of Talfourd's, is usually tacked on to one dated June 1806.

'Miss Evans.' Coleridge's first love. Her brother was at Christ's Hospital with him.

'Poor Spencer.' William Robert Spencer (1769-1834) was the author of *jeux d'esprit* and poems. He is now known, if at all, by his ballad of *Bed Gellert*. He married the widow of Count Spreti, and in 1804 published a book of elegies entitled *The Year of Sorrow*. Spencer was among the translators of Bürger's *Leonore*, his version being illustrated by Lady Diana Beauclerk (his great-aunt) in 1796. Lamb used this anecdote as a little article in the *Reflector*, No. II, 1811, entitled 'On the Ambiguities arising from Proper Names' (see vol. i of my edition). Lamb, however, by usually spelling the real poet with a 'c,' did nothing towards avoiding the ambiguity!

This is the sonnet which Lamb copied into Wordsworth's Spenser from George Chalmers's *Supplemental Apology for the Believers in the Shakespeare-Papers* (1799), page 94:

To the Right worshipful, my singular good friend, Mr. Gabriel Harvey,
Doctor of the Laws:

Harvey, thee happy above happiest men
I read: that sitting like a looker on
Of this world's stage, doest note with critique pen
The sharp dislikes of each condition:
And as one careless of suspicion,
Ne fawnest for the favour of the great:
Ne fearest foolish reprehension
Of faulty men, which danger to thee threat.
But freely doest, of what thee list, entreat,
Like a great Lord of peerless liberty:
Lifting the good up to high honours seat,
And the Evil damning ever more to dy.

For life, *and* death is [are] in thy dooeful writing:
So thy renowne lives ever by endighting.

Dublin: this xviii of July, 1586;

Your devoted *friend*, during life,
EDMUND SPENSER.]

181. TO WILLIAM HAZLITT

[Dated at end: 19th February 1806.]

DEAR H.,

Godwin has just been here in his way from Johnson's. Johnson has had a fire in his house; this happened about five weeks ago; it was in the daytime, so it did not burn the house down, but did so much damage that the house must come down, to be repaired: his nephew that we met on Hampstead Hill put it out: well, this fire has put him so back, that he craves one more month before he gives you an answer.

I will certainly goad Godwin (if necessary) to go again this very day four weeks; but I am confident he will want no goading.

Three or four most capital auctions of Pictures advertised. In May, Welbore Ellis Agar's, the first private collection in England, so Holcroft says. In March, Sir George Young's in Stratford-place (where Cosway lives), and a Mr. Hulse's at Blackheath, both very capital collections, and have been announc'd for some months. Also the Marquis of Lansdowne's Pictures in March; and though inferior to mention, lastly, the Truthsessian gallery. Don't your mouth water to be here?

T'other night Loftus called, whom we have not seen since you went before. We meditate a stroll next Wednesday, Fast-day. He happened to light upon Mr. Holcroft's Wife, and Daughter, their first visit at our house.

Your brother called last night. We keep up our intimacy. He is going to begin a large Madona and child from Mrs. H. and baby. I fear he goes astray after ignes fatui. He is a clever man. By the bye, I saw a miniature of his as far excelling any in his shew cupboard (that of your sister not excepted) as that shew cupboard excells the shew things you see in windows—an old woman—damn her name—but most superlative; he has it to clean—I'll ask him the name—but the best miniature I ever saw,

equal to Cooper and them fellows. But for oil pictures!—what has he [to] do with Madonas? if the Virgin Mary were alive and visitable, he would not hazard himself in a Covent-Garden-pit-door crowd to see her. It an't his style of beauty, is it?—But he will go on painting things he ought not to paint, and not painting things he ought to paint.

Manning is not gone to China, but talks of going this Spring. God forbid!

Coleridge not heard of.

I, going to leave off smoke. In mean time am so smoky with last night's 10 Pipes, that I must leave off.

Mary begs her kind remembrances.

Pray write to us—

This is no Letter, but I supposed you grew anxious about Johnson.

N.B.—Have taken a room at 3/- a week, to be in between 5 & 8 at night, to avoid my *nocturnal* alias *knock-eternal* visitors. The first-fruits of my retirement has been a farce which goes to manager tomorrow. *Wish my ticket luck.*

God bless you, and do write,—Yours, *fumosissimus*,

C. LAMB.

Wednesday, 19 Feb., 1806.

[Johnson was the publisher whom we have already seen considering Hazlitt's abridgment of the *Light of Nature Pursued*.

Lamb was always interested in sales of pictures: the on-view days gave him some of his best opportunities of seeing good painting. The Truchsessian Picture Gallery was in New Road, opposite Portland Place. Exhibitions were held annually, the pictures being for sale.

Loftus was Tom Loftus of Wisbech, a cousin of Hazlitt.

Holcroft's wife at that time, his fourth, was Louisa Mercier, who afterwards married Lamb's friend, James Kenney, the dramatist. The daughter referred to was probably Fanny Holcroft, who subsequently wrote novels and translations.

Cooper, the miniature painter, was Samuel Cooper (1609-72), a connection by marriage of Pope's mother, and the painter of Cromwell and other interesting men. Mr. Blunden conjectures the miniature of the old woman to be that now treasured in the Maidstone Museum.

Lamb's N.B. contains his first mention of his farce, *Mr. H*. We are not told where the 3s. room was situated. Possibly in the Temple.

'Fumosissimus.' Tobacco not left off yet.]

182. MARY LAMB TO SARAH STODDART

[? 20th, 21st, and 22nd February 1806.]

MY DEAR SARAH,

I have heard that Coleridge was lately going through Sicily to Rome with a party, but that, being unwell, he returned back to Naples. We think there is some mistake in this account, and that his intended journey to Rome was in his former jaunt to Naples. If you know that at that time he had any such intention, will you write instantly? for I do not know whether I ought to write to Mrs. Coleridge or not.

I am going to make a sort of promise to myself and to you, that I will write you kind of journal-like letters of the daily what-we-do matters, as they occur. This day seems to me a kind of new era in our time. It is not a birthday, nor a new-year's day, nor a leave-off-smoking day; but it is about an hour after the time of leaving you, our poor Phoenix, in the Salisbury Stage; and Charles has just left me for the first time to go to his lodgings; and I am holding a solitary consultation with myself as to the how I shall employ myself.

Writing plays, novels, poems, and all manner of such-like vapouring and vapourish schemes are floating in my head, which at the same time aches with the thought of parting from you, and is perplexed at the idea of I-cannot-tell-what-about notion that I have not made you half so comfortable as I ought to have done, and a melancholy sense of the dull prospect you have before you on your return home. Then I think I will make my new gown; and now I consider the white petticoat will be better candle-light worth; and then I look at the fire, and think, if the irons was but down, I would iron my Gowns—you having put me out of conceit of mangling.

So much for an account of my own confused head; and now for yours. Returning home from the Inn, we took that to pieces, and ca[n]vassed you, as you know is our usual custom. We agreed we should miss you sadly, and that you had been, what you yourself discovered, *not at all in our way*; and although, if the Post Master should happen to open this, it would appear to him to be no great compliment, yet you, who enter so warmly into the

interior of our affairs, will understand and value it, as well as what we likewise asserted, that since you have been with us you have done but one foolish thing, *vide* Pinckhorn (excuse my bad Latin, if it should chance to mean exactly contrary to what I intend). We praised you for the very friendly way in which you regarded all our whimsies, and, to use a phrase of Coleridge's, *understood us*. We had, in short, no drawback on our eulogy on your merit, except lamenting the want of respect you have to yourself—the want of a certain dignity of action, you know what I mean, which—though it only broke out in the acceptance of the old Justice's book, and was, as it were, smothered and almost extinct, while you were here—yet is so native a feeling in your mind, that you will do whatever the present moment prompts you to do, that I wish you would take that one slight offence seriously to heart, and make it a part of your daily consideration to drive this unlucky propensity, root and branch, out of your character.—Then, mercy on us, what a perfect little gentlewoman you will be!!!—

You are not yet arrived at the first stage of your journey; yet have I the sense of your absence so strong upon me, that I was really thinking what news I had to send you, and what had happened since you had left us. Truly nothing, except that Martin Burney met us in Lincoln's-Inn-Fields, and borrowed four-pence, of the repayment of which sum I will send you due notice.

Friday [21st February 1806].—Last night I told Charles of your matrimonial overtures from Mr. White, and of the cause of that business being at a *stand-still*. Your generous conduct in acquainting Mr. White with the vexatious affair at Malta highly pleased him. He entirely approves of it. You would be quite comforted to hear what he said on the subject.

He wishes you success, and, when Coleridge comes, will consult with him about what is best to be done. But I charge you, be most strictly cautious how you proceed yourself. Do not give Mr. W. any reason to think you indiscreet; let him return of his own accord, and keep the probability of his doing so full in your mind; so, I mean, as to regulate your whole conduct by that expectation. Do not allow yourself to see, or in any way renew your acquaintance with, William, nor do not do any other silly

thing of that kind; for, you may depend upon it, he will be a kind of spy upon you, and, if he observes nothing that he disapproves of, you will certainly hear of him again in time.

Charles is gone to finish the farce, and I am to hear it read this night. I am so uneasy between my hopes and fears of how I shall like it, that I do not know what I am doing. I need not tell you so, for before I send this I shall be able to tell you all about it. If I think it will amuse you, I will send you a copy. *The bed was very cold last night.*

Feb. 21 [? 22].—I have received your letter, and am happy to hear that your mother has been so well in your absence, which I wish had been prolonged a little, for you have been wanted to copy out the Farce, in the writing of which I made many an unlucky blunder.

The said Farce I carried (after many consultations of who was the most proper person to perform so important an office) to Wroughton, the Manager of Drury Lane. He was very civil to me; said it did not depend upon himself, but that he would put it into the Proprietors' hands, and that we should certainly have an answer from them.

I have been unable to finish this sheet before, for Charles has taken a week's holidays [from his] lodging, to rest himself after his labour, and we have talked to-night of nothing but the Farce night and day; but yesterday [I carried it to Wroughton; and since it has been out of the [way, our] minds have been a little easier. I wish you had [been with] us, to have given your opinion. I have half a mind to sc[ribble] another copy, and send it you. I like it very much, and cannot help having great hopes of its success.

I would say I was very sorry for the death of Mr. White's father; but not knowing the good old gentleman, I cannot help being as well satisfied that he is gone—for his son will feel rather lonely, and so perhaps he may chance to visit again Winterslow. You so well describe your brother's grave lecturing letter, that you make me ashamed of part of mine. I would fain rewrite it, leaving out my 'sage advice;' but if I begin another letter, something may fall out to prevent me from finishing it,—and, therefore, skip over it as well as you can; it shall be the last I ever send you.

It is well enough, when one is talking to a friend, to hedge in an

odd word by way of counsel now and then; but there is something mighty irksome in its staring upon one in a letter, where one ought only to see kind words and friendly remembrances.

I have heard a vague report from the *Dawes* (the pleasant-looking young lady we called upon was Miss Daw), that Coleridge returned back to Naples: they are to make further enquiries, and let me know the particulars. We have seen little or nothing of Manning since you went. Your friend [George] Burnett calls as usual, for Charles to *point out something for him*. I miss you sadly, and but for the fidget I have been in about the Farce, I should have missed you still more. I am sorry you cannot get your money. Continue to tell us all your perplexities, and do not mind being called Widow Blackacre.

Say all in your mind about your *Lover*, now Charles knows of it; he will be as anxious to hear as me. All the time we can spare from talking of the characters and plot of the Farce, we talk of you. I have got a fresh bottle of Brandy to-day: if you were here, you should have a glass, *three parts brandy*—so you should. I bought a pound of bacon to-day, not so good as yours. I wish the little caps were finished. I am glad the Medicines and the Cordials bore the fatigue of their journey so well. I promise you I will write often, and *not mind the postage*. God bless you. Charles does *not* send his love, because he is *not* here.

Yours affectionately,

M. LAMB.

Write as often as ever you can. Do not work too hard.

[Coleridge left Malta for Rome on 21st September 1805. He was probably at Naples from October 1805 to the end of January 1806, when he went to Rome, remaining there until 18th May. Writing to Mrs. Clarkson on 2nd March 1806, Mary Lamb says: 'My Brother has received a letter from Stoddart dated 26th December, in which he tells him that Coleridge was then at Naples. We have also heard from a Mr. Dawe that a friend of his had received a letter of the same date, which mentioned Coleridge having been lately travelling towards Rome with a party of gentlemen; but that he changed his mind and returned back to Naples. Stoddart says nothing more than that he was driven to Naples in consequence of the French having taken possession of Trieste.' (See the *Athenaeum*, 23rd January 1904.)

'*Vide Pinckhorn.*' I cannot explain this, unless a Justice Pinckhorn had ogled Sarah Stoddart and offered her a present of a book. Mary Lamb, by the way, some years later taught Latin to William Hazlitt, Junior, Sarah's son.

Mr. White was not Lamb's friend, James White.

Winterslow, in Wiltshire, about six miles from Salisbury, was a small property belonging to Sarah Stoddart.

'Widow Blackacre.' In Wycherley's *Plain Dealer*: a busybody and persistent litigant.

Mr. P. P. Howe, in his *Life of Hazlitt*, says boldly of Lamb: 'With George Burnett he had compiled *Specimens of English Prose Writers*; but probably this "pointing out" was the extent of his collaboration.']

183. CHARLES LAMB TO JOHN RICKMAN

March, 1806.

DEAR RICKMAN,

I send you some papers about a Salt-water soap, for which the Inventor is desirous of getting a parliamentary reward, like Dr. Jenner. Whether such a project be feasible, I mainly doubt, taking for granted the equal utility. I should suppose the usual way of paying such projectors is by patents and contracts. The patent, you see, he has got. A contract he is about with the Navy board. Meantime, the projector is hungry. Will you answer me two questions, and return them with the papers as soon as you can? Imprimis, is there any chance of success in application to Parliament for a reward? Did you ever hear of the invention? You see its benefits and saving to the nation (always the first motive with a true projector) are feelingly set forth: the last paragraph but one of the estimate, in enumerating the shifts poor seamen are put to, even approaches to the pathetic. But, agreeing to all he says, is there the remotest chance of Parliament giving the projector anything; and *when* should application be made, now or after a report (if he can get it) from the navy board? Secondly, let the infeasibility be as great as you will, you will oblige me by telling me the way of introducing such an application to Parliament, without buying over a majority of members, which is totally out of projector's power. I vouch nothing for the soap myself; for I always wash in *fresh water*, and find it answer tolerably well for all purposes of cleanliness; nor do I know the projector; but a relation of mine has put me on writing to you, for whose parliamentary knowledge he has great veneration.

P.S. The Capt. and Mrs. Burney and Phillips take their chance at cribbage here on Wednesday. Will you and Mrs. R. join

the party? Mary desires her compliments to Mrs. R., and joins in the invitation.

Yours truly,

C. LAMB.

[Captain Burney we have already met. His wife, Sarah Burney, was, there is good reason to suppose, in Lamb's mind when he wrote the *Elia* essay, 'Mrs. Battle's Opinions on Whist.' Phillips was either Colonel Phillips, a retired officer of marines, who had sailed with Burney and Captain Cook, had known Dr. Johnson, and had married Burney's sister; or Ned Phillips (Rickman's secretary).]

184. MARY LAMB TO MRS. THOMAS CLARKSON

[Dated at end: *13th March 1806.*]

MY DEAR MRS. CLARKSON,

Your kind letter would have given me great pleasure but for the concern I feel at the uneasiness you express at the unjust reports you have heard of John Wordsworth. It is upon your own account alone that I am distressed at it: for my own part I totally disbelieve it, and so does my brother and he desires me to tell you in the strongest terms I can think of, his full conviction that the injurious falsehood you have heard is intirely void of foundation. The report coming from an underwriter Charles says makes it easy to be accounted for, because it is a well known fact that they always impute blame to the Captain whenever a Ship is lost. My brother says that he never heard a whisper at the India House, (or any where else) of poor John Wordsworth being drunk, which had that been the case would certainly he says have been known and talked of there. He is quite certain the India Directors were perfectly satisfied with his conduct, and that no blame has ever been imputed to him.

We are very glad you have not told Wordsworth, and earnestly beg you never will tell him, because it may not be easy to get at evidence strong enough to make him perfectly satisfied. It was with great difficulty that my brother got at the intelligence he sent to Wordsworth, the survivors almost all being gone out to India in other ships. We think we can trace the story of his being drunk to this slight foundation. A gentleman of the name of Burgoyne, a cornet in the string, who was a passenger in the Ship told at the India House that a few minutes

before the Ship sunk, he had opened a bottle of Cordial, and persuaded Cap^a Wordsworth to take two glasses, and gave the remainder of the bottle to those who happened to stand near him, and that while he was in the act of opening another bottle to distribute more the Ship went down. This Burgoyne we endeavored to find out. We were directed to him from an Army Agent to the Prince of Wales Coffee House in Conduit Street. I went there, but he had left town, the Master of the Coffee House promised to forward a letter to him from my brother. Charles requested Burgoyne to address his answer to William Wordsworth. I mentioned this circumstance to Dorothy but as she took no notice of it in her answer to my letter I am afraid he never wrote. I have been again this morning to this Coffee House, to enquire for Burgoyne, and find he is now in Ireland. The Master of the House with whom I had a long conversation assured me that Burgoyne never imputed the least blame to Captain Wordsworth, and that he had heard him speak very handsomely of him and that he never heard the least word of his being in liquor. You may place great confidence on this man's testimony because Burgoyne came to the Prince of Wales Coffee house immediately on his arrival in Town from Weymouth. My brother says that this bad report coming from an underwriter he is the less surprized at it, because it is a well known fact that whenever a Ship is lost the underwriters always blame the Captains, and he has no doubt, no more have I, that the story of Burgoyne giving him the cordial, was told from one to another, till at last the two glasses became a bottle and then the underwriters said he was drunk. We do not even think it possible for any quantity of liquor to make a man drunk in the agony of feeling he must have been in at that time. But let me again beg you will not tell what you have heard to Wordsworth, because we are certain we can get no positive proof, without we see and talk ourselves with some of the survivors—and for that we must wait till they return from India.

You are very kind to interest yourself about our little affairs. When I wrote last I was in great haste, and had not time to say more than that I had heard from Coleridge and in my former letter my brother was unwell, which made me feel so uncomfortably, that I was glad to say anything or nothing rather than

talk of ourselves. Thank God he is now perfectly well, and so am I. Charles has been lately very busily employed *writing a farce*. It is in the Manager's hand, but we have yet heard nothing of it's fate, and we have many foolish hopes and fears about it, he has begun another farce, he talks of writing three, and among them all he thinks he shall then have some chance of one succeeding. Wordsworth has advised him to write a Novel and I think he will soon begin one, for he often talks about it. Certainly he seems more disposed to write than I have known him for a very long time. If you have not had it from Wordsworth shall I send you a poem Charles wrote on tobacco? Wordsworth likes it very much.

Manning is going out to China, very soon, he is endeavoring to get a passage in a China Ship, he had intended to go through Russia but he found so many difficulties in the way that he gave up the idea. We shall miss him very much, for he has been very much with us lately, and we love him dearly.

You say nothing about yourself, and you gave a very *cross* reason because I set you the example. You do not even say how you are in health, but it must have been your anxiety about poor John Wordsworth made you forget what you must know we were so very anxious to hear. Will you be so kind as to write soon for I shall be uneasy till I hear if you are more satisfied about this injurious report. I wish you would feel as I do that it is most certainly a *wicked and malicious falsehood*.

My brother wishes to know if Mr. Clarkson has finished his *Quaker book*, and what he is doing. Are you settled at Purfleet? You gave us some hopes that you were coming to live near town. Have you given up that idea?

God bless you my dear Mrs. Clarkson, my brother joins with me in friendly remembrances and affectionate wishes.

Your affectionate friend

M. LAMB.

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